

Starting from Scratch:

A Beginner's Guide to Developing New Events
for the Small Garden

Smith-Gilbert Gardens

Municipal Garden

17 acres

Opened to public

since 2009

Annual Visitation 11,589
(2017)

6 FT and 1 PT Staff +
CITY

More than 200 volunteers

5,000+ volunteer hours
(2017)

\$547,000 annual City
budget



Collection Highlights



Plants & more



Crevice Garden



EVENTS

Who, What, When



EGG HUNT

Member incentive -
early sign up and
discount

Sold out 2018

Challenges: Limited
Parking

50 spaces

Online ticket sales -
specific times



BIRD BANDING



WHAT?

Hummingbird Banding
Specific time of year

600+ visitors in 3-hour
period

Value added for
members:

VIP event for Members
& special guests



Hummingbird Whisperer

Local talent - only 150
with Master Permit to
band these birds

Branding:

Press loves the “hook”

SGG is Audubon
Certified

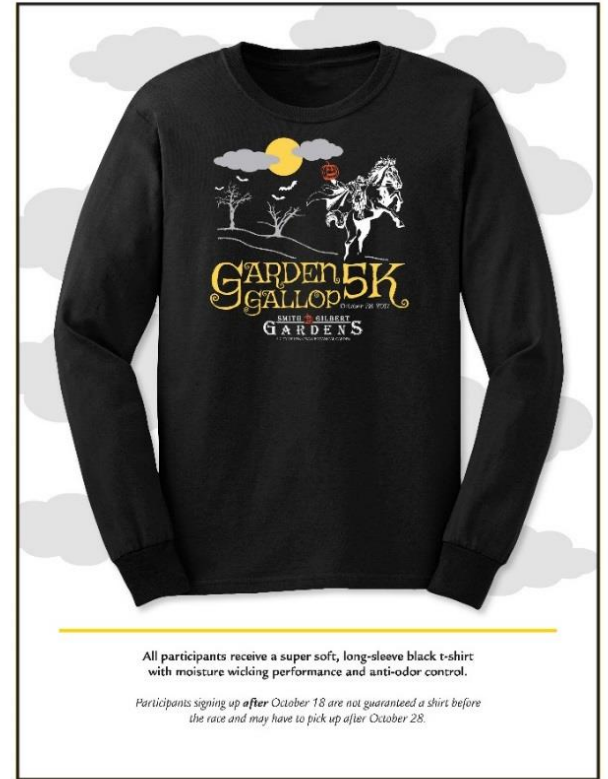
Connection to
Founders

Online ticket sales

Day of tickets - higher
price



GARDEN GALLOP 5K



5K

Race Management
Connect to strong theme
Downtown Kennesaw
Family-oriented
Avid runners
\$15,000 + net
225% growth - when other races are declining



Why it works

Sanctioned race - serves as a qualifier for Peachtree Road Race - biggest 10K

Not just a Fun Run

SHIRT - changes every year

Connection to CITY - Branding



More with less

Parking Challenge

Not possible to add
more events

Needed to make
transition away from
one day events



We had an idea...



Planning 101

- Budget
- Site
- Sunny vs. shade
- Covering for structure
- Drainage
- Water source
- Accessibility - doors and paths
- Surface materials
- Staging areas for mulch, chrysalises
- Nursery area for growing plants
- Security
- GO Native....



Marketing on a tiny budget

- Leadership Cobb project
- Limited ad campaign
 - Social Media focus
- Created a buzz
- Limited time only!



If you build it, they will come!



Challenges: What donors saw



What we saw



Results

- First Year:
250% increase in
attendance in
August
- Second Year:
Donors Got It!



With events + summer exhibits: WINNING....

43% increase in annual
visitation

30% increase in
membership

120% increase in school
visits

\$1 million impact in local
economy

Won award from Cobb
Travel





Children'sSM
Healthcare of Atlanta
presents



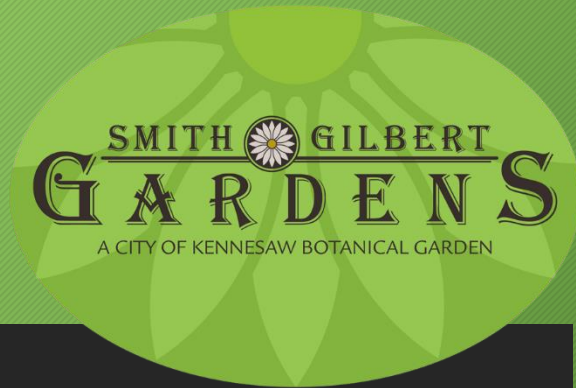
TreeMendous

Coming June 2018

Play Houses

Let your imagination climb





Ann Parsons, Executive Director

aparsons@kennesaw-ga.gov

770-919-0248