

The Development of Social Media for the IPPS Eastern Region[®]

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INTRODUCTION

Whether we like it or not, more people, companies, and organizations are joining and using Facebook[®] each day. After the 2010 Eastern Region meeting, the IPPS Eastern Region created a Facebook page <www.facebook.com/IPPSEER> and an informal committee to work on and maintain it. This page replaced an outdated Eastern Region Facebook group.

DISCUSSION

Currently, there are over 800 million active Facebook users in the world, of which about 200 million reside in the United States. Fifty percent of users log onto Facebook at least once each day (Facebook Statistics, 2011). Two-thirds of Facebook users will select a product or company based on a recommendation from a Facebook friend (eMarketer Digital Intelligence, 2010). With companies and other organizations harnessing the power of Facebook, IPPS Eastern Region decided to try to increase awareness of the organization through Facebook updates, notifications, and discussions.

The goal of the IPPS Eastern Region Facebook page is to create a network where members and nonmembers can have year-round connections and discussions. During the 2011 Eastern Region meeting, Eastern Region attendees actively posted pictures of the tours, talks, and other events. Several speakers even commented that they watched and enjoyed seeing what the group was doing through Facebook prior to the speaker arriving at the meeting. Showing what was happening during the meeting gives prospective members an opportunity to see first-hand what they could experience during the annual meeting.

This talk specifically showed how to “like” the IPPS Eastern Region page by clicking on the “like” button underneath the IPPS Eastern Region title once at our page (Fig. 1). Additionally, several of the features along the left hand side of the Facebook page were explained (Fig. 2).

One of the features briefly explained was the wall on our Facebook page. It is an excellent place for posting relevant comments, photos, and questions. One example was from a member located at the U.S. National Arboretum who was looking for suggestions for a research study. This member wanted to start a study on woody plants that readily callus but were slow to root. We posted his message on the Facebook site to try to receive some information from other members. Social media is an excellent place to list questions similar to this to receive instant feedback from fellow horticulturists. In order for social media to work efficiently, it is essential to have a solid database of people who “like” our Facebook page.

Other features that were discussed included the photos link and events link. The photos link allows everyone to see any previously uploaded photos. These photos could be from an area meeting, past meetings, or any other pictures that were add-

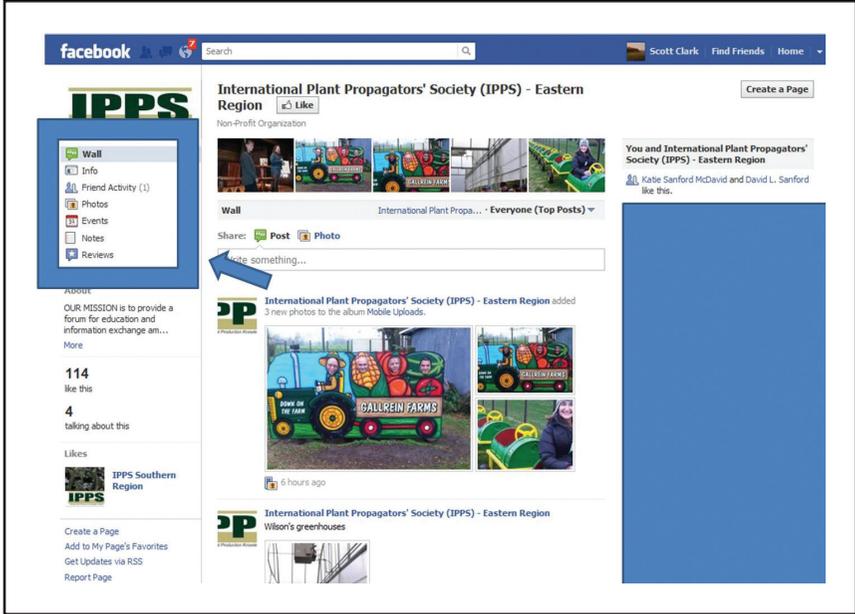


Figure 1. From <www.facebook.com/IPPSER>.

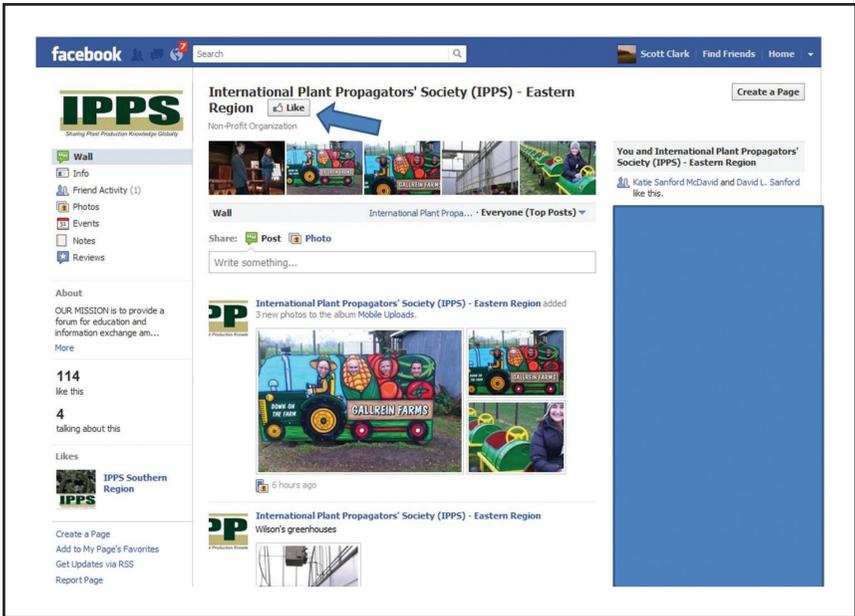


Figure 2. From <www.facebook.com/IPPSER>.

ed to our page. The events link was shown as it is an excellent place to look to see what future events may be occurring through the Eastern Region, such as the annual meeting or area meetings.

CONCLUSION

Facebook is a new feature for the Eastern Region but has the potential to allow interactions between members and prospective members throughout the year. It allows for relevant information and important notices to be posted. By “liking” the IPPS Eastern Region page, it shows each person’s Facebook friends that this is an interesting and important organization, which in turn, may lead to their Facebook friends looking into the IPPS organization. In today’s technology-fueled world, Facebook is another means for the Eastern Region to spread the word about our organization and goals.

Acknowledgements. Special thanks to Scott Clark for allowing me to use his Facebook account for our screen shot images and the administrator members of the IPPSER Facebook page for their help the past year.

ADDITIONAL READING

eMarketer Digital Intelligence. 2010. <www.emarketer.com/Articles/Print.aspx?1007630>, accessed 12 Oct. 2011.

Facebook Statistics. <www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics>. Accessed 12 Oct. 2011.

IPPSER Facebook Page. <www.facebook.com/IPPSER>, accessed 12 Oct. 2011.