8 Great Social Media Spots for Gardeners

http://socialwebdaily.com

"Green thumbs know that gardening is a serious business—and thanks to social media, plugged-in hobby botanists can swap tips, problem-solve, and display beautiful pics of their bountiful gardens. Whether it's gardening advice via Twitter, "guerilla gardening" in urban centers, or a botany iPhone app, these social media tools are sure to help your garden grow—and better than ever before!"

**Your Garden Show:** Your Garden Show connects gardeners of all different specialties in one place for some serious collaborative growth. Visitors can track the progress of their garden, glean quality growing tips, and even meet some new friends.

**Yard Share:** Yard Share is a great way to connect with other gardeners online. It's also a great way to get landscape pointers from your neighbors, create a joint yard with nearby gardeners, and share growing and planting tips with other experienced greenthumbs.

**Oh My Bloom:** Oh My Bloom is self-ascribed as "America's largest gardening social network"—and they're not kidding! Garden lovers will find an exhaustive amount of resources on the site—from videos, photos, groups, forums, and more. Visitors can trade gardening pictures, tips, and share their blogs.

**Garden Rant:** This is one of our favorite gardening sites here at Social Web Daily. Garden Rant's slogan is, "Uprooting the gardening world," and the site will impress even the most dedicated gardeners. With beautiful pictures, great commentary, and true gardening know-how, this spot is not to be missed.

**Gardener to Farmer:** Gardener to Farmer is a gardening blog with serious personality. With a focus on vegetable gardening, this site is chock full of useful tips, gardening insight, and plenty of greenthumb humor.

**@GardeningAdvice on Twitter:** This Twitter account is one of our favorite ways to get gardening tips on the go. With constant updates and truly useful tips, die-hard gardeners are sure to appreciate all the knowledge @GardeningAdvice dolls out via Twitter.

**The Pothole Gardener:** Urban gardeners rejoice! The Pothole Gardener is a blog devoted to "guerilla gardening." And it's an inspiring way to celebrate unexpected greenery in urban settings. From flowers planted in sidewalk cracks, to mini-gardens made out of potholes, this blog is not to be missed for anyone who loves gardens in concrete-adding cities.

**Botany Buddy iPhone App:** The Botany Buddy iPhone app is an excellent way to brush up on your botany know-how. Users will find plenty of information about a wealth of different plants—especially flowers and shrubs. It's a must-have tool for any 2.0 gardener.
What is Social Media?

The best way to define social media is to break it down. Media is an instrument on communication, like a newspaper or a radio, so social media would be a social instrument of communication.

In Web 2.0 terms, this would be a website that doesn't just give you information, but interacts with you while giving you that information. This interaction can be as simple as asking for your comments or letting you vote on an article, or it can be as complex as Flixster recommending movies to you based on the ratings of other people with similar interests.

Think of regular media as a one-way street where you can read a newspaper or listen to a report on television, but you have very limited ability to give your thoughts on the matter.

Social media, on the other hand, is a two-way street that gives you the ability to communicate too.

Social Media – Defined

Social media refers to the means of interactions among people in which they create, share, and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein define social media as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content." Furthermore, social media depend on mobile and web-based technologies to create highly interactive platforms through which individuals and communities share, co-create, discuss, and modify user-generated content. It introduces substantial and pervasive changes to communication between organizations, communities and individuals.

Social media differentiates from traditional/industrial media in many aspects such as quality, reach, frequency, usability, immediacy and permanence. There are many effects that stem from internet usage. According to Nielsen, internet users continue to spend more time with social media sites than any other type of site. At the same time, the total time spent on social media in the U.S. across PC and mobile devices increased by 37 percent to 121 billion minutes in July 2012 compared to 88 billion minutes in July 2011.

Much of the criticism of social media are about its exclusiveness as most sites do not allow the transfer of information from one to another, disparity of information available, issues with trustworthiness and reliability of information presented, concentration, ownership of media content, and the meaning of interactions created by social media. However, it is also argued that social media has positive effects such as allowing the democratization of the internet while also allowing individuals to advertise themselves and form friendships.

Most people associate social media with positive outcomes, yet this is not always the case. Due to the increase in social media websites, there seems to be a positive correlation between the usage of such media with cyber bullying, online sexual predators and the decrease in face-to-face interactions. Likewise, media seem to be influencing kids' lives in terms of exposing them to images of alcohol, tobacco, and sexual behaviors. This issue is becoming even more prominent as kids are starting to engage with such media sites at younger ages. Instead of giving a kid a toy at the dinner table to keep them quiet, parents are now resorting to iPads and other technological devices that are more advanced. Kids are thus learning how to operate technological devices at ages where they are able to become experts as infants.
Classification of social media

Facebook is a key example of a social media site, with over one billion active users in October 2012.

Social media technologies take on many different forms including magazines, Internet forums, weblogs, social blogs, microblogging, wikis, social networks, podcasts, photographs or pictures, video, rating and social bookmarking. By applying a set of theories in the field of media research (social presence, media richness) and social processes (self-presentation, self-disclosure) Kaplan and Haenlein created a classification scheme in their Business Horizons (2010) article, with six different types of social media: collaborative projects (for example, Wikipedia), blogs and microblogs (for example, Twitter), content communities (for example, YouTube and DailyMotion), social networking sites (for example, Facebook), virtual game worlds (e.g., World of Warcraft), and virtual social worlds (e.g., Second Life). Technologies include: blogs, picture-sharing, vlogs, wall-postings, email, instant messaging, music-sharing, crowdsourcing and voice over IP, to name a few. Many of these services can be integrated via social network aggregation platforms.

Internet usage effects: (Some Interesting... others Disturbing)

An increasing number of scholars have sought to study and measure the impact of social media (such as the Museum of Social Media). A 2010 study by the University of Maryland suggested that social media services may be addictive, and that using social media services may lead to a "fear of missing out," also known as the phrase "FOMO" by many students. It has been observed that Facebook is now the primary method for communication by college students in the U.S. According to Nielsen, global consumers spend more than six hours on social networking sites. "Social Media Revolution" produced by Socialnomics author Erik Qualman contains numerous statistics on social media including the fact that 93% of businesses use it for marketing and that if Facebook were a country it would be the third largest. Several colleges and universities such as Harvard, Johns Hopkins, Columbia and Stanford among others have even introduced classes on best social media practices, preparing students for potential careers as digital strategists.

There are various statistics that account for social media usage and effectiveness for individuals worldwide. Some of the most recent statistics are as follows:

- Consumers continue to spend more time on social networks than on any other category of sites—roughly 20 percent of their total time online via personal computer (PC), and 30 percent of total time online via mobile.
- Total time spent on social media in the U.S. across PCs and mobile devices increased 37 percent to 121 billion minutes in July 2012, compared to 88 billion in July 2011.
- Facebook remains the most-visited social network in the U.S. via PC (152.2 million visitors), mobile apps (78.4 million users) and mobile web (74.3 million visitors), and is multiple times the size of the next largest social site across each platform.
- 51% of people aged 25–34 used social networking in the office, more than any other age group.
- While the computer is still the primary device used to access social media despite dropping 4% in usage in 2012, the last year saw a significant increase in usage, most notably through tablets from 3% to 16%.
- People continue to spend more time on social networks than any other category of sites—20% of their time spent on PCs and 30% of their mobile time.
As of 2012, Facebook has 152,226,000 unique PC visitors and 78,388,000 unique mobile app visitors. Twitter reported 37,033,000 unique PC visitors and 22,620,000 unique mobile app visitors. Pinterest reported 27,223,000 unique PC visitors and 14,316,000 unique mobile web visitors. Google+ reported 26,201,000 unique PC visitors and 9,718,000 unique mobile app visitors.\(^6\)

A total of 234 million people age 13 and older in the U.S. used mobile devices in December 2009.\(^5\)

Twitter processed more than one billion tweets in Dec 2009 and averages almost 40 million tweets per day.\(^2\)

Over 25% of U.S. Internet page views occurred at one of the top social networking sites in December 2009, up from 13.8% a year before.\(^2\)

Australia has some of the highest social media usage in the world. In usage of Facebook, Australia ranks highest, with over nine million users spending almost nine hours per month on the site.\(^3\)

The number of social media users age 65 and older grew 100 percent throughout 2010, so that one in four people in that age group are now part of a social networking site.\(^4\)

As of May 2012 Facebook has 901 million users.\(^8\)

In June 2011, it was reported that iPhone applications hit one billion in nine months, and Facebook added 100 million users in less than nine months.\(^9\)

In June 2011, it was also reported that U.S. Department of Education study revealed that online students outperformed those receiving face-to-face instruction.\(^9\)

YouTube is the second largest search engine in the world.\(^9\)

In four minutes and 26 seconds 100+ hours of video will be uploaded to YouTube.\(^10\)

One out of eight couples married in the U.S. last year met via social media – 2011

One in six higher education students are enrolled in an online curriculum.\(^2\)

In November 2011, it was reported Indians spend more time on social media than on any other activity on the Internet.\(^3\)

1 in 5 divorces are blamed on Facebook.\(^1\)

According to a report by Nielsen\(^3\)

“In the U.S. alone, total minutes spent on social networking sites has increased 83 percent year-over-year. In fact, total minutes spent on Facebook increased nearly 700 percent year-over-year, growing from 1.7 billion minutes in April 2008 to 13.9 billion in April 2009, making it the No. 1 social networking site for the month.”

**Examples of most popular social media websites:**

- **Social Bookmarking.** (Blinklist, Simpy) Interact by tagging websites and searching through websites bookmarked by other people.

- **Social News.** (Digg, Propeller, Reddit) Interact by voting for articles and commenting on them.

- **Social Networking.** (Facebook, Hi5, Last.FM) Interact by adding friends, commenting on profiles, joining groups and having discussions.

- **Social Photo and Video Sharing.** (YouTube, Flickr) Interact by sharing photos or videos and commenting on user submissions.

- **Wikis.** (Wikipedia, Wikia) Interact by adding articles and editing existing articles.