

1/1/2019

#Trending on Instagram

Shane Pliska



On one seemingly ordinary Monday morning, I received a surprise; A photograph of my dad carrying a large Monstera cutting over his shoulders was reposted to the @Boyswithplants Instagram page. This Instagram account normally posts photographs of male fitness models in their 20s posing next to plants, so for the curators to select a photo of Larry Pliska, my 72-year-old dad and founder of our family greenhouse business, was very unusual.

What was even more unusual was the reaction it received. A photo on the @Boyswithplants page, which has an audience of 93,000 followers, normally receives about 2,000 to 3,000 likes. My dad's photo received a whopping 6,000 likes within the first 12 hours, and by day two, the photo had clocked in 9,500 likes, outperforming the usual Insta-models by 300%.

Wondering why this is important? The link between plants trending on the Internet and houseplant sales at the cash register is strong. In fact, it's so strong, it got the attention of *The Economist* magazine recently, which detailed the Google search terms for houseplants and how they've changed over the past 10 years. Traffic is up by 100% for the search term "Devil's Ivy," also known as pothos. *The Economist* credits the boom to Millennials opting to purchase houseplants instead of actual houses.

So why was my dad's photo so popular? For starters, he bears a resemblance to the "Most Interesting Man"

from the Dos Equis beer ads. However, for this popular photo, he wasn't dressed as a Dos Equis beer spoof. He was simply being himself.

His age did in fact make him stand out. We asked Scott Cain, the owner and curator of @boyswithplants, about the photo and he explained: "I try to balance amazing plants with amazing guys and show guys of all sizes, ages and backgrounds. And, honestly, it's not that easy to find guys outside the typical age range on Instagram."

Despite all of this, my dad who isn't a social media expert, wisely pointed out that "the size of the Monstera cutting and its roots should excite even the most casual houseplant collector."

You see, for houseplant hoarders and geeks on social media, Monday is affectionately known as "#MonsteraMonday" on Instagram. It's one of the most popular hashtags to use. People tag photographs of their prized Philodendron Monstera plants or simply take selfies posing next to giant groves of Monsteras at botanical gardens or greenhouses. It was my company that originally posted the photo of my dad on our Instagram Page @planterraplants because it featured a Monstera for Monstera Monday. That's how @boyswithplants found it. At the time our Instagram account for Planterra's plantscape business was new with only 200 followers; after that photo went viral, the number of followers doubled in two days. **GP**

Shane Pliska is president of Planterra, a nationally-known interior landscaping business that provides and maintains office plants for corporate spaces. He also serves as president of Planterra Conservatory, an award-winning botanical garden wedding and event venue in West Bloomfield, Michigan.

What's Trending on Instagram?

Here's a list of some of the most popular houseplant-related hashtags:

#MonsteraMonday

#SucculentJunkie

#SuccuLove

#SucculentAddict

#PlantsofInstagram

#Indoorjungle

#Flowerporn

#houseplantclub

#houseplantsinstagram

#crazyplantlady