Sprouting Seed



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Marcie McKean

Prototype: https://xd.adobe.com/view/66d96d97-0e62-4d9c-6942-776dc1c49c70-10e8/?fullscreen

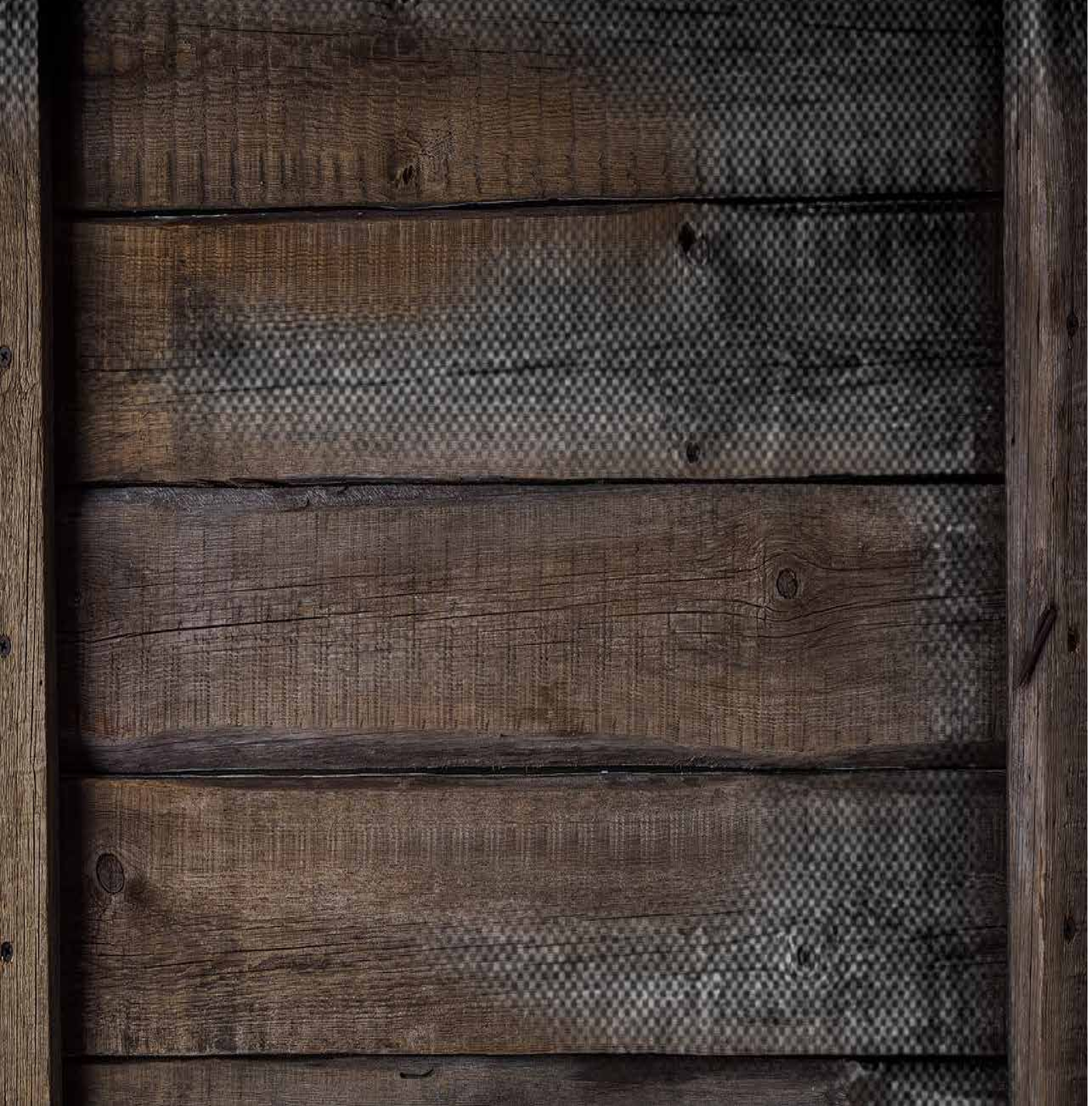


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Client Introduction

It’s Nice to Meet You...

“The Sprouting Seed is a one of a kind plant nursery that doubles as an event venue with a small intimate outdoor area that all started as a passion project in 2014. We wanted to do something we loved with people we cared about to create something positive for others. Our love of dirt and backyard jam sessions lead us to combine our loved interests and create a nursery packed with its own personality and character - Sprouting Seed. It has grown into our wildest dreams. Not only do we provide our community with plants from local vendors; but, we also offer educational classes, jam sessions/concerts, and a trendy small venue to host gatherings throughout the year. Till this day we continue to be a passionate bunch of fun-loving plant nerds who are committed to the gardening/blooming success of our customers.”

-Sprouting Seed

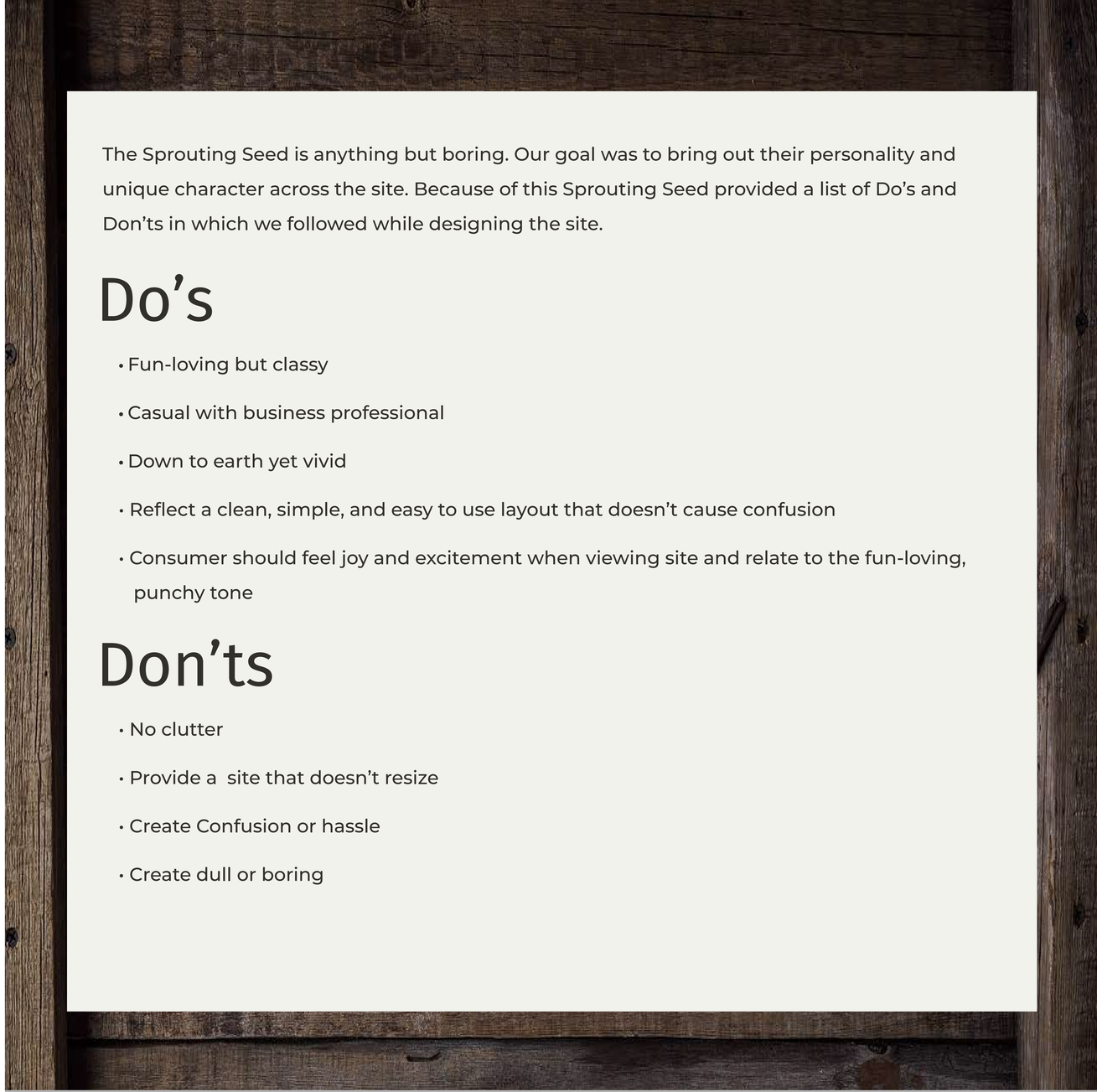
Project Overview & Requirements

Because Sprouting Seed had never had an online presence, this project entailed designing and building a site to provide the nursery and event center with the ability to further connect and engage with customers. Realizing that boring was not an option, the design goal was to encapsulate their uniqueness of products and services inspiring us to capture their fun-loving, laid back personality and character. With this site we wanted to:

1. Create an online shopping experience that would allow local residential consumers to pur chase plants from the comfort of their own home.
2. Expand ticket sales and bring awareness to upcoming events in which Sprouting Seed has to offer.
3. Give booking agents and organizers a place to easily check the availability of the venue.

Furthermore, we wanted the design to help assist with brigning awareness to Sprouting Seed allowing it to become an attractive choice for the local community in the area for hosted events all while also increasing plant sales in an online environment. Our goals included:

1. Drive more revenue from new website
    - Increase daily plant revenue by 50% by 3 months after launch of site
    - Increase daily ticket revenue by 10% by 3 months after launch of site
    - Grow the total average order amount by 25% by 3 months after launch of site
2. Increase engagement with online community
    - Increase online engagement by 100% upon launch
    - Establish and increase social presence by 100% by 4 months after launch of site



The Sprouting Seed is anything but boring. Our goal was to bring out their personality and unique character across the site. Because of this Sprouting Seed provided a list of Do’s and Don’ts in which we followed while designing the site.

Do’s

- Fun-loving but classy
- Casual with business professional
- Down to earth yet vivid
- Reflect a clean, simple, and easy to use layout that doesn’t cause confusion
- Consumer should feel joy and excitement when viewing site and relate to the fun-loving, punchy tone

Don’ts

- No clutter
- Provide a site that doesn’t resize
- Create Confusion or hassle
- Create dull or boring

Design Process

I’m More Than a Pretty Face ...

1. Define the Problem

You can’t find a solution until you have a clear idea of what the problem is, and Sprouting Seed had no online presence, while also trying to increase profits.

2. Collect Information

Inspiration came from all around. Collecting sketches, taking photographs and gathering data via online and in person provided the motivation need to create concepts and direction.

3. Brainstorm and Analyze Ideas

Sketching wireflows, making user journeys, and studing competitor workflows helped bring understanding to how all the data and information collected may impact the design.

4. Develop Solutions

Preliminary ideas were then taken to form multiple small-scale design solutions.

5. Gather Feedback

A beta site showcasing the proposed solution was presented to testers within the target audience to provide insightful comments and feedback.

6. Improve

User feedback was then analyzed and decided if or to what extent it should be incorporated. Solutions then went back through the above dekign process for further refinement and clarification.





Branding & Logo Design

We took the heart and soul of Sprouting Seed and translated it into design by developing a cohesive Brand Style Guide. The goal was to provide clear directions on how to communicate the brand effectively and govern the composition, design, and general look-and-feel of Sprouting Seed branding. Brand integrity is a fragile thing, so it needed to be treated as such and these brand guidlines ensured that Sprouting Seeds brand is used in a way that upholds the aesthetic standards and keeps their brand looking professional and consistent. The folowing pages includes the details of how we developed the Sprouting Seed brand to encourage quality, consistancy, and recognition.

Sprouting Seed

Sprouting Seed

The smallest the logo should be represented is 1.5” wide.

Primary Logo

Sprouting Seeds primary logo is a simple word-mark. It has a playful vibe and the hand drawn style makes it feel unique, creative, and free spirited all while giving it a sense of movement to emphasize the active nature of the brand.

This is the main logo that will be used across primary brand applications. This trademark helps audiences easily identify Sprouting Seeds storefront, products, web presence, ads, and other materials, and enhances the professionalism of the brand. It is essential to the success of the brand that the logo always be applied with care and respect in every application according to these guidelines.

Color Usage

The color usage for Sprouting Seed is minimal. The logo will mostly be used in Green (HEX #72AA00), Black (HEX #171716) or White (HEX #FFFFFF).

Sprouting Seed

Sprouting Seed



Clear Space

To ensure legibility, always keep a minimum clear space around the logo of 50px. This space isolates the mark from any competing graphic elements like other logos or body copy that might conflict with, overcrowd, and lessen the impact of the mark.

Unacceptable Usage

A few rules are necessary for maintaining the integrity of the brand. Don't compromise the overall look of the logo by rotating, skewing, or distorting in any way - that includes adding unnecessary and unattractive text decorations like drop-shadows and outlines. Here are a few examples of some ways you should NEVER consider using the logo.

A. Don't rotate the logo.

B. Don't squash or stretch.

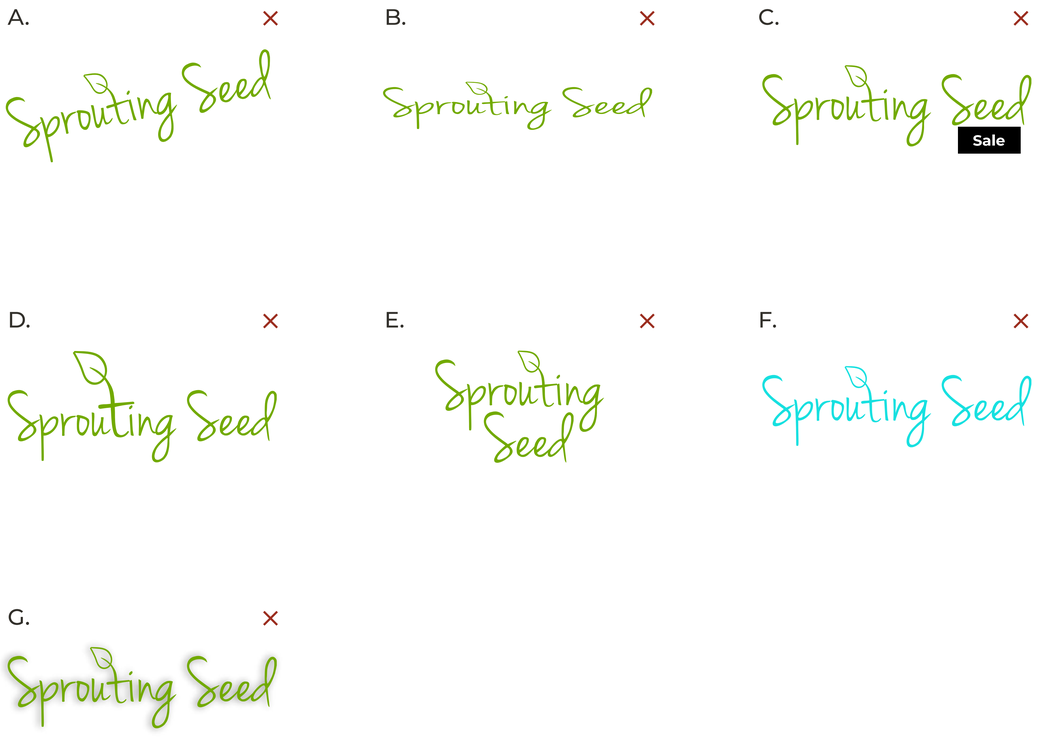
C. Don't place elements in the logo clear space.

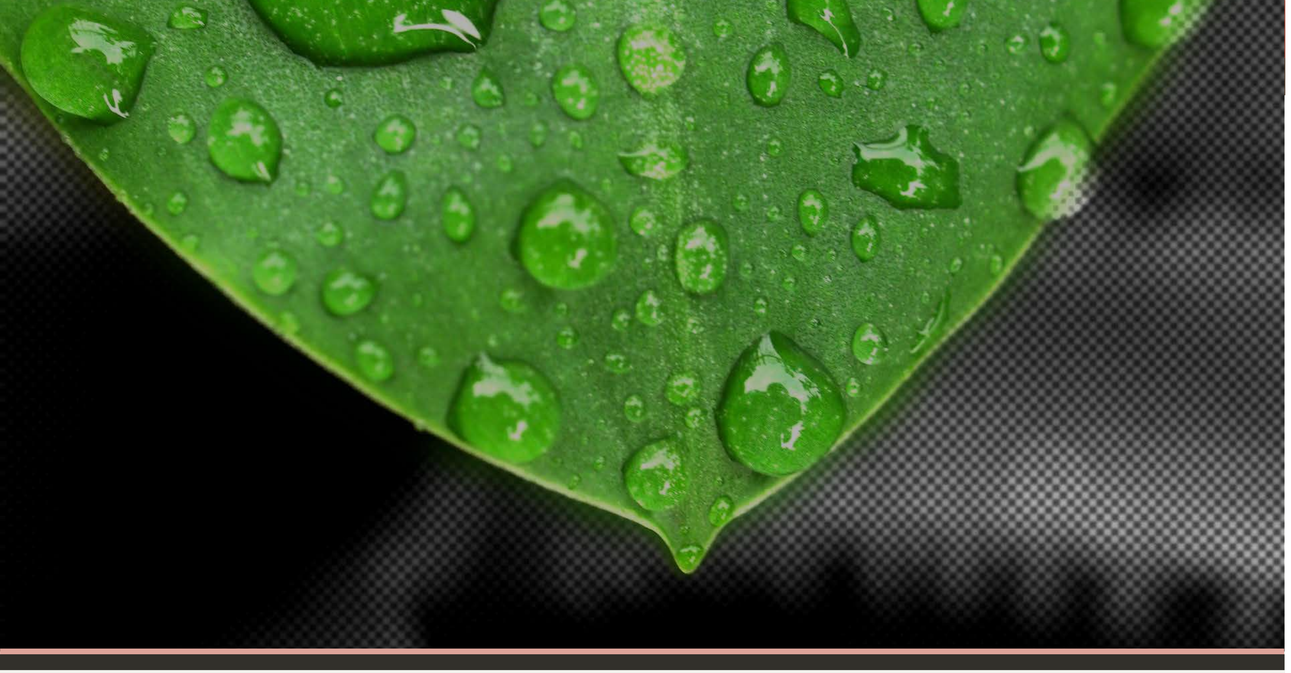
D. Don't resize any part.

E. Don't rearrange parts or create compositions that are not already provided.

F. Don't use off-brand colors. Reference the Color Usage section.

G. Don't add drop-shadows or other text styles.





FLOWERS MAKE

People Happy

Typography

Typography is a powerful brand tool when used consistently. This set of typefaces best represent the bold, organic feel of the brand and should be used across all print & web applications.

Fira Sans

Use for headlines.

Web letter-spacing: 0

Fira Sans

Regular • **Medium** • **Semi-bold** • **Bold**

A B C D E F G H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Montserrat

Use for body copy.

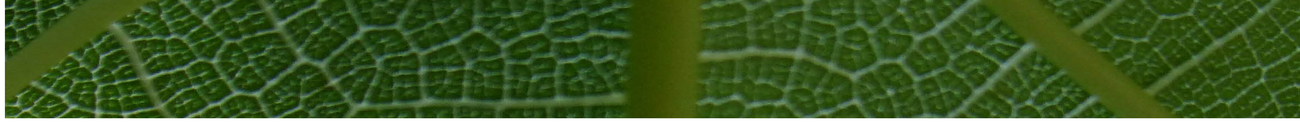
Sentence case

Web letter-spacing: 0

Montserrat

Regular • Medium • **Semi-bold** • **Bold**

A B C D E F G H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z



Color Palette

Color is an integral part of brand identity. Consistent use of the color palette will not only reinforce the cohesiveness of the brand, but also serve a psychological purpose by communicating a certain feeling to our audience.

The green, brown and red color palette is reminiscent of earthy color trends. But more than that, the colors represent the values of Sprouting Seed. The Sprouting Seed primary and secondary color palettes consists of complementary and monochromatic earth tones to maintain a warm, natural and organic presence which supports the overall market branding.

Primary Color Palette

These primary colors focus on creating an exciting and dramatic effect that is easier on the eyes of the on looker. In addition, these colors provide an inviting palette in which establishes a classic and modern feel to engage all markets.

Green
HEX #72AA00
RGB (114 170 0)

Strategy

The main feature base color, Green, sets the tone and branding for Sprouting Seed. Additionally, Rich Brown and Brick Red feature accent colors create further visual interest for secondary sections that demand an audience attention but is not the primary subject matter. Accent colors are to be used in small areas and/or minimalistic-ally.
This palette is to be used in high traffic areas which serve as main focal points (i.e. navigation bars, footers, and main page promotional backgrounds). To administer additional flexibility, this palette may also be used with iconography, logo design, and call to action buttons when attention is demanded from the audience.

Rich Brown
HEX #563D29
RGB (86 61 41)

Brick Red
HEX #A9422E
RGB (169 66 46)



Secondary Color Palette

Working in a monochromatic scheme, these secondary colors further accentuate the primary palette providing additional tints and shades for warmer and cooler tones if needed. This palette continues to capture earthy feels and natural vibes conveying a sense of growth and health, making it perfect for organic, environmentally friendly, and healthy products.

Strategy

The secondary palette serves as an extension of the primary palette, providing additional accent colors to use for secondary section backgrounds, highlights and secondary actions. In addition to the above aforementioned, the black and white range is used for text and icon outlines. It is important to note that this range may also be used as background colors to create contrast in high traffic areas (i.e. navigations bars, footers, and text blocks). If needed opacities of 25%, 50% and 75% can be applied to the darkest gray and lightest white.

HEX #496BO6
RGB (73 107 6)

HEX #80634A
RGB (128 99 74)

HEX #5D1308
RGB (93 19 8)

HEX #99C147
RGB (153 193 71)

HEX #948069
RGB (148 128 105)

HEX #9B2D1F
RGB (155 45 31)

HEX #C0D693
RGB (192 214 147)

HEX #A8998C
RGB (168 153 140)

HEX #DEA49A
RGB (222 164 154)

HEX #E0EDC7
RGB (224 237 199)

HEX #D6CDC5
RGB (214 205 197)

HEX #F2D4CE
RGB (242 212 206)

HEX #171716
RGB (23 23 22)

HEX #32302B
RGB (50 48 43)

HEX #696864
RGB (105 104 100)

HEX #E2E2DA
RGB (226 226 218)

HEX #F2F2ED
RGB (242 242 237)

HEX #FFFFFF
RGB (255 255 255)

Photography

WE HAVE A SIMPLE RULE FOR PHOTOGRAPHY SELECTION - THINK SIMPLE.

Always choose photography that has a point of view. Sometimes more is not better. More is just more. If there is one perfect shot and three mediocre, go with the one perfect shot. Be conscious of composition. Be conscious of whether the picture evokes any emotion. Additionally textural photography along with applying textures can be used to stylize photography and bring natural elements into a design.

Guidelines

- Photography must be at least 300dpi at the size expected to print and maintain integrity of the photos.
- Must use imagery that is not visibly dated.
- Photography must depict attractions and events that are part of Sprouting Seed.
- Product images are to show the product as an individual unit and not in conjunction with other products.
- Do not stretch photography to fill space.











UX Evaluation Process

The new Sprouting Seed website has two goals: 1) Drive more revenue and 2) Increase engagement with Online community. Targeting the local community members, among gardeners and event goers, the Sprouting Seed website was tested for ease of use and organization of information by taking different elements into account.

Some important factors that define usability are:

- Ease of use
- Organization of Information
- Terminology used
- Navigation of overall site

Because the Sprouting Seed site is for the local community, participants were found locally.

- Participants ranged in ages of 18-60
- 1 of the 4 test participants found it difficult to rent the venue
- The ease of use and design of the website consistently received positive feedback from users
- 2 of the 4 test participants stated that they did not expect events at a nursery but loved the concept

The folowing pages includes the details of how we conducted our research, the results we found, and a brief list of recommended changes in order to improve the Sprouting Seed website to make it more usable.



75%

of participants were able to successfully complete all tasks.

25%

of participants were unable to complete all tasks.

100%

of participants enjoyed this specific experience

100%

of participants successfully completed the purchase process using the website.

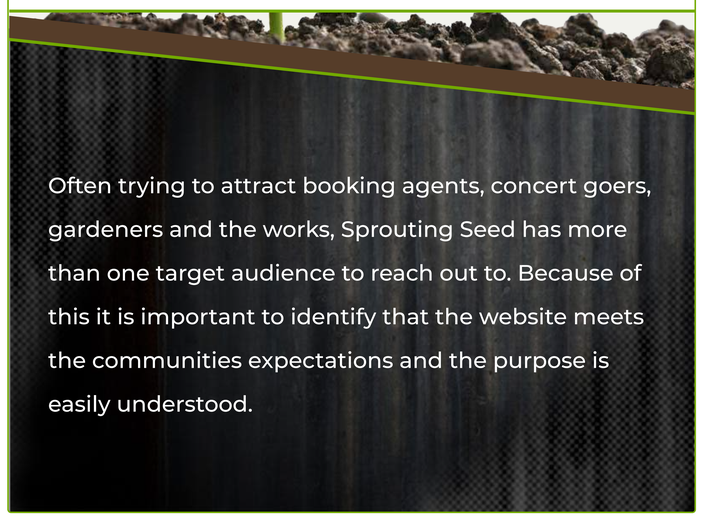
100%

of participants would recommend the Sprouting Seed website to a friend.

50%

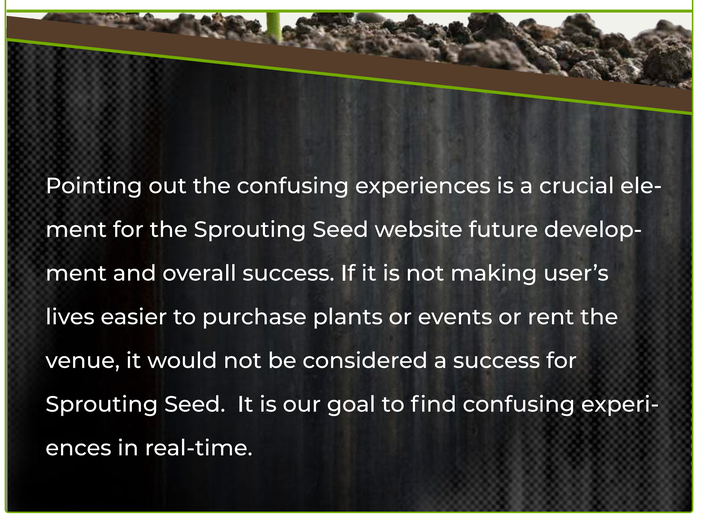
of participants would use the Sprouting Seed website 2-3 times a week.

Test Site Concept with Target Audience.



Often trying to attract booking agents, concert goers, gardeners and the works, Sprouting Seed has more than one target audience to reach out to. Because of this it is important to identify that the website meets the communities expectations and the purpose is easily understood.

Revel Points of Friction and Confusing Experiences



Pointing out the confusing experiences is a crucial element for the Sprouting Seed website future development and overall success. If it is not making user's lives easier to purchase plants or events or rent the venue, it would not be considered a success for Sprouting Seed. It is our goal to find confusing experiences in real-time.

Identify Navigation Issues with the Site



Understanding possible navigation issues with the Sprouting Seed website in advance will help the product team come up with the best solutions of informational organization and indexing. This will allow us to take actions before it is too late. Additionally, this will provide Sprouting Seed with a better idea how the website is being perceived by beta users.

Methodology

Outreach & Screening

Users tested the Sprouting Seed website in a controlled environment within the comfort of their own homes. Participants were volunteers and chosen based on screening criteria.

Channels Used:

- Direct outreach via telephone
- Word of mouth

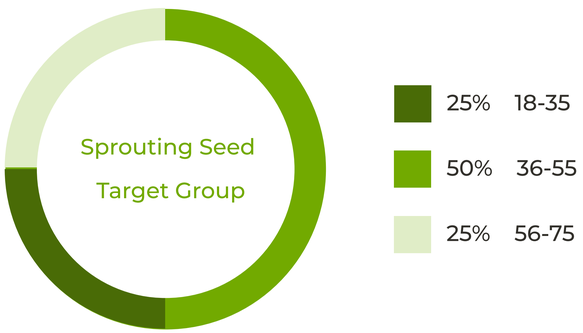
Screening Criteria:

- Participants who are between the ages of 18 - 60
- Participants with and without web experience
- Participants with and without Online purchasing experience.
- Local community members
- Gardeners and those active in the community

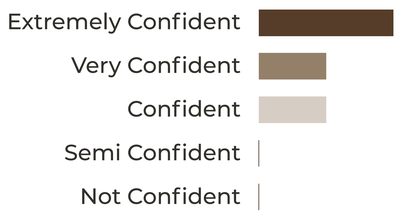
Participant Profiles

Name	Age	Gender	Occupation
David C.	59	M	Retired
Eric M.	40	M	Tax Program Supervisor
Lynn M.	23	F	Customer Service
Jacob M.	38	M	Student

Age Distribution



Web Proficiency



Disclaimer

Some important factors that affected the results of the usability test:

1. The sample size may not be representative of all people that my use the website.
2. Human error and misinterpretations of qualitative feedback may effect the results to slight but varying degrees.
3. A series of common bugs and errors occurred (listed to left).
4. While moderation began with a set agenda, some questions that were not on the printed surveys varied from participant to participant.
5. Tested prototype was limited on functionality and some features (such as the main image slider not working) may effect slightly effect usability and information organiza tion results.

Testing Setup, Moderation & Post-Test Questions

1. Introduction

A comprehensive study and interview of a small target group (4 participants) took place to get feedback on how the Sprouting Seed website faired in usability. Participants were provided with a packet which included Pre-Test Questions, Tasks, and Post-Test Questions. A moderator was set in place to perform introductions and walk participants through the testing process.

Pre-Test Questions - Getting to Know Our Users

Participants were asked the following pre-test questions in an informal interview:

- Name
- Age
- Occupation
- On a scale of 1 -5 how would you rate your level of confidence of navigation the web?
- How often do you make purchases Online
  - When was the last time you engaged in an Online purchase?
    - What tools did you use, if any to help you with your purchase?
    - Please describe your experience.
- How much would you say you know about gardening?
- Would you consider hiring someone for you gardening needs?
- Would you purchase plants Online
  - Why or why not?
- Do you partake in community activities?
  - How often do you go to events?
  - When going to an event, do you purchase tickets ahead of time?
  - When planning to go to an event, is price a deciding factor?

2. Tasks

Task Scenarios in which were realistic, encouraged an action and did not give away how the interface should be used, were formulated to engage testers during usability testing. A moderator was set in place during this process to read each question and observe actions taken by each tester.

Task Scenarios and Questions

An assigned moderator read each of the following scenarios and tasks to testing participants:

- Look at the site for 5 seconds. Then look away. What is the site about?
- Scenario 1

  Imagine you are working on a home garden project and you haven't had time to purchase flowers or plants. The stores have closed, but you want your plants as soon as possible to complete your project. Using the website:

  - Add a Dianthus to your cart
  - Purchase the Dianthus that you added to your cart
- Scenario 2

  It's a 3 day weekend and you with a group of friends want to go to a concert. Using the website:

  - Navigate to the Events Page
  - Add the DREAMERS concert event to your cart
  - Remove the DREAMERS concert event from your cart
- Scenario 3

  It's Bills 50th birthday and you are in charge of renting a venue. Using the website:

  - Rent the venue

3. Post-Test Questions

To gather feedback on the overall user experience, post-testing questions were provided to testers. These questions enabled us to comprehensively evaluate the performance of each task to accomplish our goal of forming a seamless and cohesive experience. An evaluation of the end-to-end user experience provided us insight into any changes that needed to be made to the workflow within Sprouting Seeds website experience.

Post-Test Questions

Upon completion of tasks, testers were asked to complete the following questions.

- Overall I am satisfied with how easy the website is to use
- It was simple to use this website
- I was able to complete the tasks quickly
- I felt comfortable using the website
- Finding information on the site was easy
- The information (such as text/content and links) were clear and easy to understand
- The information (such as text/content and links) was effective in helping me com plete the tasks
- The design of the site was pleasant
- The organization of information on the site was clear
- I liked interacting with the website
- The site had all the functions and capabilities I expect it to have
- How would you describe your overall experience with the site?
- What did you like most about using the site?
- What did you like least about using the site?
- What, if anything, surprised you about the experience?
- What,if anything, caused you frustration
- On a scale of 1 - 5, how likely are you to recommend this site to a friend?
- How frequently would you use this site?

Results

Data and feedback were collected and analyzed after tests were completed by the participants.



Overall Concept

75%

of participants understood the core premise and overall concept of the website

100%

of participants found the design of the website to be pleasant

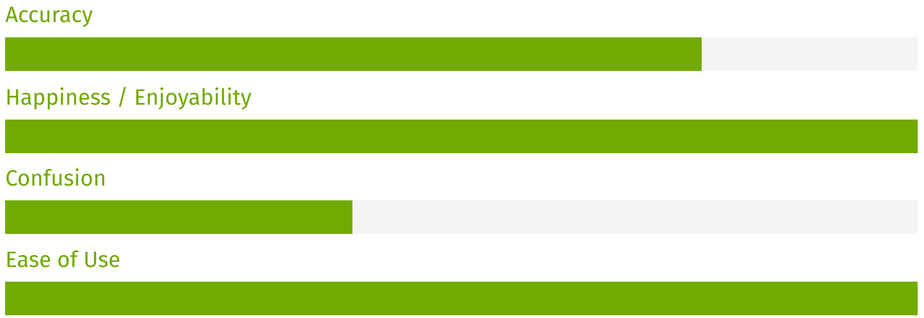
75%

of participants successfully completed all tasks related to the overall goals of the website

25%

of participants experienced difficulty navigating the website

Breakdown



Majority of participants found the Sprouting Seed website easy to use and understand.

"Within a few moments I knew how to navigate and find what I want."

Eric M

0% of participants would purchase plants Online

"I'm afraid they would die."

Jacob M

100% of participants liked interacting with the website

"It had a community feel where it was more than a selling website - also offered classes/events and social get togethers."

Lynn M

Results cont.

Category 1 - Ease of Use



Overall Concept

100%

of participants enjoyed the overall experience related to ease of use using the website.

100%

of participants were put off by the response time of the prototype.

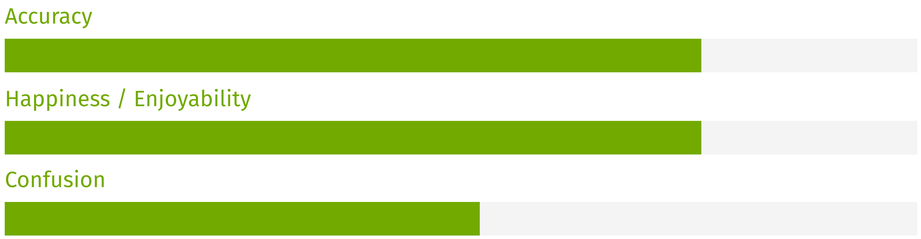
100%

of participants were able to successfully complete all tasks related to ease of use

50%

of participants had difficulty using certain functions related to ease of use for the website

Breakdown



100% of participants strongly agreed that the website was easy to use.

"It was easy, and I don't shop Online."

David C

50% of participants did not know when an item was added to their cart.

"I wish there was a notification that told me my item was added to the cart"

Eric M

100% of participants were observed getting frustrated over site response time.

"Why is it so slow? Shouldn't the page change right when I click the button... not 5 seconds afterwards?"

Lynn M

Results cont.

Category 2 - Organization and Information



Overall Concept

25%

of participants were unable to locate information based on terminology

100%

of participants successfully found products and events through the websites hierarchy.

100%

of participants were able to successfully navigate through purchase pages

25%

of participants were unable to complete tasks based on terminology

Breakdown

Accuracy

Happiness / Enjoyability

Confusion

25% of participants were unsure on how to rent the venue.

"I Wanted to rent the venue for an event. I went to events. How do I do this? It's an event."

David C

50% did not use the header to navigate the website

"I wish the header would follow when I scrolled. Oh wait! It does. I didn't notice that"

Eric M

Bugs & Issues

Some issues and bugs were identified during the testing process.

General

- Prototype performance was slow and unresponsive to participants clicks

Ease of Use & Organization of Information

- Image slider did not perform as expected and as a result participants did not see additional slides

Recommendations & Action Items

General

- The slider needs to function properly according to user feedback
- Delivery guarantee of a healthy plant should be in a visible area on the website

Ease of Use

- Label text needs to be added next to the remove icon
- Icons are suggested through user feedback to improve header awareness
- Notify the user that an item has been added or removed from their cart
- Flower cards need to indicate product size according to user feedback
- Event cards need to show date, time and price at a glance according to user feedback

Organization of Information

- Events and Services concept should be improved and clarified.

Supporting Documentation

Return Policy

According to Search Engine Journal, a 2016 infographic and survey by Invesp shows:

- At least 30% of all products ordered online are returned.
- 92% of consumers will buy again if product return process is easy.
- 67% of shoppers check the returns page before making a purchase.[1]

By providing a healthy plant guarantee return policy to consumers, Sprouting Seed reassures buyers that if they are not satisfied with their purchase in any way, the brand is there for them.

Icon Usability

The Nielsen Norman Group suggests a user's understanding of an icon is based on previous experience. Due to the absence of a standard usage for most icons, text labels are necessary to communicate the meaning and reduce ambiguity.[2]

Shopping Cart Feedback

On ecommerce sites, the first step of purchasing a product is adding it to the shopping cart. Clear feedback that this step was completed successfully gives users a sense of control and allows them to confidently continue shopping or proceed with their checkout. (It also complies with two of the 10 usability heuristics — visibility of system status and error prevention, as it reassures people that they have not slipped and added the wrong item.)[3]

1. Search Engine Journal - https://www.searchenginejournal.com/15-must-have-features-for-e-commerce-sites/181974/#close
2. NN/g Nielsen Norman Group - https://www.nngroup.com/articles/icon-usability/
3. NN/g Nielsen Norman Group - https://www.nngroup.com/articles/cart-feedback/

Design Updates

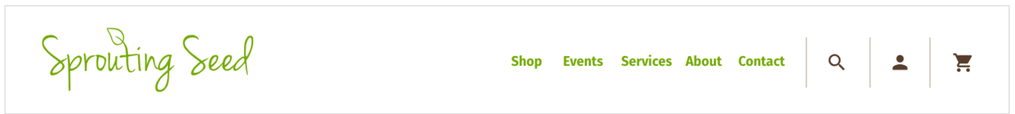
There’s Always Room For Growth!

We took our results and changed things up! Through user feedback and testing we discovered several usability issues in our inital experience. After researching new possible solutions we came up with the following redesign...

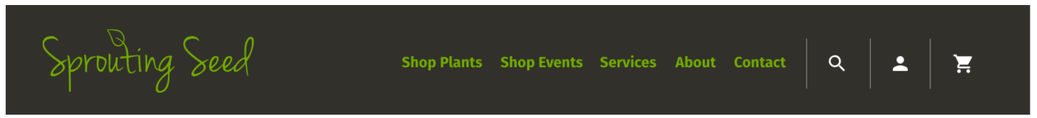
Header Awareness/ Banner Blindness

During initial testing it was observed that testers did not notice nor utilize the header for main navigation. While breadcrumbs stood out, the header disappeared into the design. As a result the header took on some reconstruction. Link font sizes were enlarged while the main background color for the header was changed to a dark grey from the color palette. The on scroll blur was also removed to keep the header solid and noticeable at the top of the page at all times. This was done to increase the sites usability and navigation.

Before



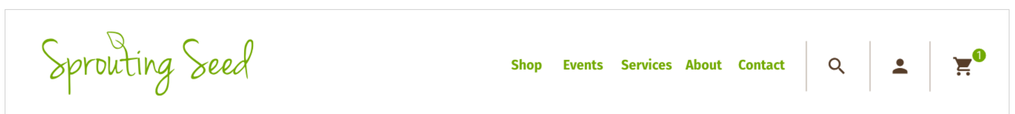
After



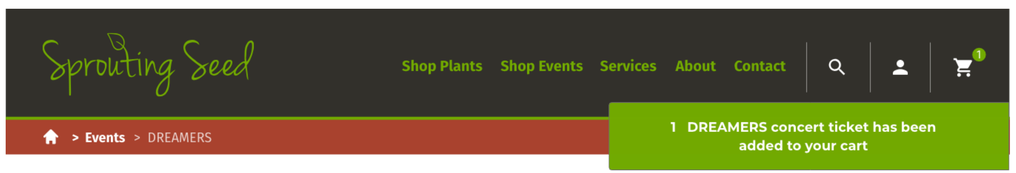
Cart Notification

Demonstrated in user testing, the cart notification was lacking at best. Many were unaware an item had been added and some requested a notification. With this addition there are two main objectives: (1)Move the shopper nearer to completing their purchase, which often means sending them to the basket page. (2) Move the shopper to buy other items, which is best served by keeping visitors on the product page with a strong notification of the ‘basket add’.

Before



After



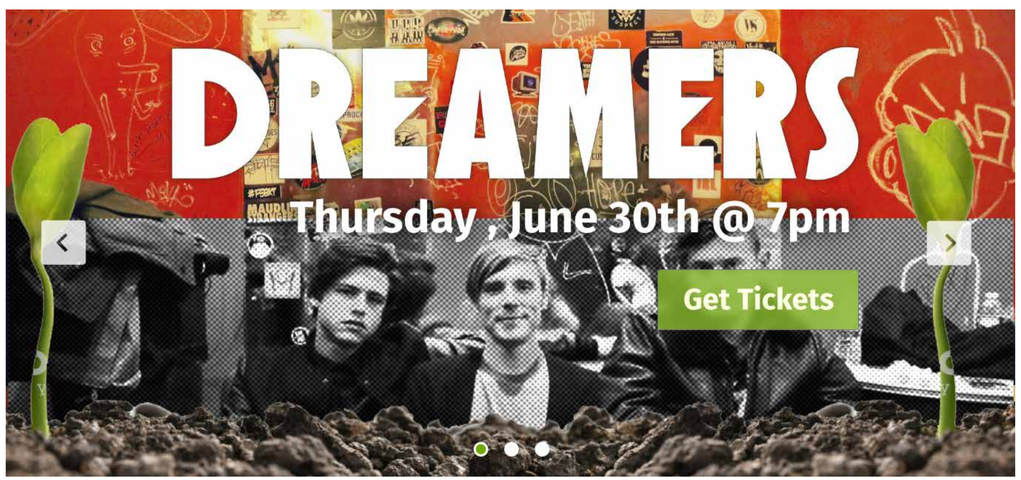
Slider Usability and Eye Capture

The initial thought with the slider was to add another source of navigation. It was identified during testing that this was not the case. Users were confused and unaware that the slider provided additional navigation with specific buttons that would take them to pinpointed interests if clicked. To accommodate for higher conversion rates, the slider was redesigned to promote other areas of concerns that were discovered during testing. These include Quality Assurance, Specific Events, and Venue Rental. Messaging also become more clear and less ambiguous. This change is to drive conversion rates by: (1) Defined Call to Actions (2) Creating trust and reassurance of product quality among users and (3) Identifying services that were previously hidden. Addiitionally this change increases site activity with new intriguing banners that draw the attention of users.

Before



After



Flower and Event Cards

Being transparent is important when focusing on conversion, but it is also important for the company brand. Prior designs didn't have specific details on flower or event cards, whether located on the main page or not. Users identified that they could not see event dates, times or pricing until on the specific event page. In an effort to increase brand trust this lead to a redesign to allow full transparency to users.

Before



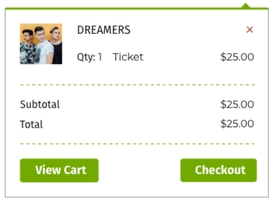


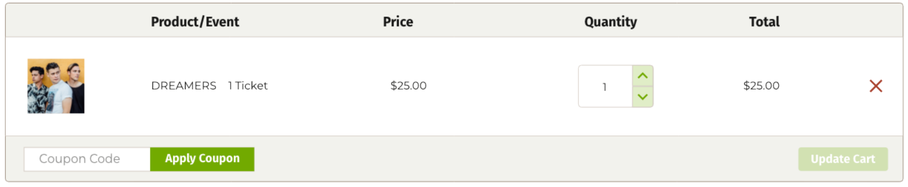
After



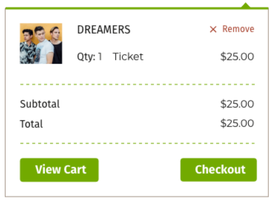


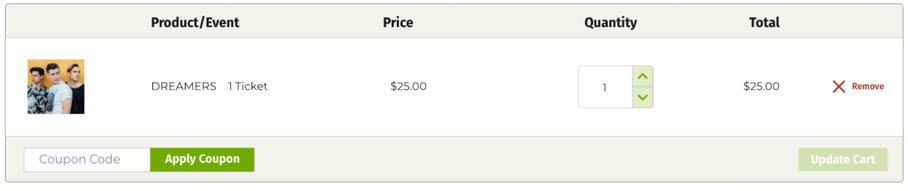
Before





After





Remove Text

While our aim is for younger audiences for Events, we still want to cater to older generations for the Nursery. Because of this even those issues discovered during testing that only 25% experienced needed to be addressed. Though the 'X' icon is a universal indicator for close or delete, older audiences found themselves not knowing how to remove an item from the cart. To fix this text was added to the right of the icon, allowing users to know exactly what it does.