

# q feature: BOYS WITH PLANTS

Plant-Based Power: An Interview with Scott Cain, the creator of Instagram's [www.instagram.com/boyswithplants](http://www.instagram.com/boyswithplants) By **George Tsangaris**

Scott Cain is the creator of the wildly popular Instagram account @boyswithplants now topping over 90k followers. The success of his page has led to the publication of the 'Boys With Plants' book. Scott is a freelance graphic designer who is based in Perth. Working from home Scott enjoys being surrounded by the plants his home is filled with.

## Where did you get the idea for BWP?

In 2016 I started a plants-themed account, [www.instagram.com/TropicalLoco](http://www.instagram.com/TropicalLoco), where I met some great people, who I chat with regularly. I used to swap pictures with [www.instagram.com/Jamesipy](http://www.instagram.com/Jamesipy) of boys with plants and realised it would make a really good page so I created [www.instagram.com/boyswithplants](http://www.instagram.com/boyswithplants) in October 2016.

By April 2017 the page had around 30k followers but it really took off in mid-2017 when [www.instagram.com/boyswithplants](http://www.instagram.com/boyswithplants) was mentioned in the Washington Post and got noticed in other publications like Cleo Magazine and Metro UK. It was around this time that I was approached by Modern Books about doing a book.

## Today you have 90k+ followers and a book that has just been released. Many people only dream of such success with their Instagram account. It almost seems like an overnight success. How did you do it?

It definitely was not an overnight success! I put a lot of work into it. I curate carefully, stick to the theme and I post three times a day: morning, noon and before I got to bed. Occasionally I might allow myself to post twice a day.

I believe the reason why [www.instagram.com/boyswithplants](http://www.instagram.com/boyswithplants) is successful is because I acknowledge the boys that are posted. I make it clear that I repost their image and the guys like how many new followers they get once they are featured.

## Which plants photograph best with boys?

The first thing I look for are the plants. My personal preference is big, bold foliage tropical houseplants like monstera, allocatia, ferns, cacti and anthuriums. It's about the plants first. The second thing I look at is the boy. If the image is not plant-focused I don't post it. I'm trying to educate my audience on what I look for.

(Scroll through [boyswithplants.com/tips](http://boyswithplants.com/tips) for tips on how to get featured).

If it's a great picture I will post it and if a boy gets posted multiple times then it's because what he submitted is more than a pretty picture. Now, once a week, I feature a 'Boy of the Week'. These are often the guys I would like to put in the book but either I was not able to feature then or they came along after the book was finalised for publication.

## What the most negative thing you experienced during your time working on [www.instagram.com/boyswithplants](http://www.instagram.com/boyswithplants)?

People are usually pretty good. However some guys get featured then feel they are getting too much attention on their own Instagram page. They get sent messages from strangers and then ask to have the photo to be taken off @boyswithplants. So they get 300 to 400 new followers because they got featured and then want their photo removed.

Recently I posted an image of guy surrounded by plants. In the image he was being playful with a cactus. Not more than 20 minutes after the photo was posted, I received negative comments, and so I removed the image. I told the boy about it and he was a good sport; he laughed it off. Things like that don't happen often though.

## How do the images resonate with your followers? Were there any controversies?

I lot a lot of people unfollowed me after I posted an image of a hunky man covering his private parts with a leaf, despite over 9500 likes. <https://instagram.com/p/B18UQVQDH0v/> It's a nice image but there are a million pages out there about muscular naked boys. I have a built an audience who are looking with boys with plants and that's what they expect to see.

<https://instagram.com/p/Bop0KQmDQUd> This photo was successful because his pose is cool; the plant is interesting with all the aerial roots showing. In this case he's a mature, masculine man and it's not sexual. It's genuine and that appeals to people. Not

## BOYS WITH PLANTS

-50 Boys and the Plants They Love-



Curated by Scott Cain

everyone appreciates sexual and that's not the intention of the page either.

### Regarding submissions; what irritates you the most and why?

People thinking they are more important than their plants. On my page they're not, even if they are good looking super-model type of guys.

### What is the most positive thing you experienced through your journey with [www.instagram.com/boyswithplants](http://www.instagram.com/boyswithplants) and why?

Receiving my book in the mail. It felt like the culmination of a lot of work, both on the page as well as the design process.

### Who was your favourite boy and why?

One of my favourite boys is Jan K, [www.instagram.com/homebyfousna](http://www.instagram.com/homebyfousna) – he photographs his plants beautifully. He is genuinely interested in plants, in growing and propagating them. And he is a good reflection of how international the page is: he is Czech and lives in Bogota, Colombia. We've built up a friendship.

### Who was your least favourite boy and why?

I don't have a least favourite boy but I do have a least favourite type of boy. It's somebody who submits a photo thinking it is amazing for the page. Maybe it ticks the boxes but for whatever reason I choose not to post it. Some of the guys follow up and are so pushy that they can become unpleasant.

I also get submissions from mums sending in pictures of their two-year old child with houseplants. While the pictures are fine I would never post images of children with plants when they are surrounded on a feed with half-naked men. It's weird. Why look at an Instagram account of men and then submit a photo of your kid?

### What demographic is your readership?

From the statistics I get, [www.instagram.com/boyswithplants](http://www.instagram.com/boyswithplants) started out with 25% guys and 75% girls. Now it has moved to 45% guys and 55% girls between the ages of 25 and 35.

### Is there anything you would like to change about BWP or the process?

I might have like to call it [www.instagram.com/menwithplants](http://www.instagram.com/menwithplants) because it's a more accurate reflection of who is represented. Initially I started out with [www.instagram.com/menwithplants](http://www.instagram.com/menwithplants) and then speaking to some friends about it they recommended that [www.instagram.com/boyswithplants](http://www.instagram.com/boyswithplants) had a better ring to it. If you look up [www.instagram.com/menwithplants](http://www.instagram.com/menwithplants) you would find a link to [www.instagram.com/boyswithplants](http://www.instagram.com/boyswithplants).

### With plants being a focus on your Instagram page you're obviously concerned about the environment. What tips would you give to your followers for them to make even a small impact to protect the environment?

I have recently started a partnership with a charity called One Tree Planted (<https://onetreepanted.org>). For every product that I sell on my page (t-shirts, mugs, stickers) I donate to them and they plant one tree. This idea came about because one of my followers suggested that if each of my followers planted one tree we would have over 90k trees planted.

### At times BWP can be fairly racy, what do people closest to you say?

My grandma hasn't seen it. My mum supports it but has not seen the page. I think it's a bit too racy for her. But she is busy with her own plant-based Instagram account.

### From boys with plants to a boy with plans: what can we expect from you 2019? Maybe 'Boys With Plants: The Movie'? Or perhaps budgie smugglers?

I have more products coming out in 2019 to go with the t-shirt, mugs and stickers that I already have out. I would like to do a variety of t-shirts. I will have a [www.instagram.com/boyswithplants](http://www.instagram.com/boyswithplants) tote bag out and things like socks, phone cases and cushions so make sure you visit the page and the site for more information. There might also be a calendar if all goes to plan in 2020.

More info on Scott and [www.instagram.com/boyswithplants](http://www.instagram.com/boyswithplants) below:

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/boyswithplants>

Website: <https://www.boyswithplants.com>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/boyswithplants>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/boyswithplants>

The 'Boys With Plants' book is out now.