



**LEWIS
GINTER
BOTANICAL
GARDEN**

Historic Garden Attraction Discovers the Benefits of REVLAR™ from Relyco in the Tropical Rainforest Environment of “Butterflies LIVE!”

Welcoming more than 349,000 visitors annually, which makes it one of the most visited attractions in the Richmond, Va., area, Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden offers year-round beauty on an historic property with more than 50 acres of spectacular gardens, dining, and shopping. A classical domed

Conservatory is the only one of its kind in the mid-Atlantic; the north wing of the Conservatory features “Butterflies LIVE!,” a seasonal indoor exhibit that allows visitors of all ages to be part of a dazzling display featuring hundreds of tropical butterflies. In addition, the Children’s Garden offers a wheelchair accessible tree house, an adventure pathway, sand and water play area, and an international village. Plus, more than a dozen themed gardens include a Healing Garden, Fountain Garden, Asian Valley, and Victorian Garden.

Currently celebrating its 30th anniversary this year, Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden was recently voted second best public garden in North America by USA Today readers.

Lewis Ginter’s Botanical Garden’s “Butterflies LIVE!” was launched as a temporary exhibit in 2004 and again in 2009; it has been operational as a seasonal attraction since. As Phyllis Laslett, adult education coordinator at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, explains, when it comes to temporary exhibits, curators face a unique challenge in determining how to best use signage to present information relevant to the exhibit itself. “In the garden where even ‘temporary’ exhibits have some continuity, signage is produced on Sintra, which is a lightweight, rigid PVC plastic to which we add a UV screen. It stands up well to hot, humid garden conditions, but can be costly and we have to outsource it,” she says. “We have also created temporary signage using lamination, though we had challenges with signs fading, mildewing, and delaminating.”

At A Glance:

Customer

Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden

Industry

Travel and Tourism

Relyco Product

REVLAR Waterproof Paper

Website

www.lewisginter.org

“The pictures and text printed on REVLAR are very crisp, and the curators really appreciate the overall appearance. Plus, the thickness of the REVLAR adds to its durability. The REVLAR sheets attach easily to the reading rails with Velcro dots, and there is no need to protect REVLAR with plex as we had to do with the laminated sheets. The signs can be wiped clean if needed; we haven’t experienced any fading or problems with mildew; and REVLAR signs are far less labor-intensive to produce. REVLAR really is an ideal solution for our application.”

Phyllis Laslett
Adult Education Coordinator
Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden



In 2011, Laslett attended the American Public Gardens Association conference, where she saw samples of REVLAR. Back at the Botanical Garden, Laslett tested the REVLAR as temporary signage in the Children’s Garden, where signs can be damaged by heat, humidity, and the challenges posed by thousands of enthusiastic little fingers. “REVLAR’s performance in the Children’s Garden was impressive,” Laslett says. “It didn’t peel or fade, and it was virtually indestructible.”

When the team at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden revisited signage needs for “Butterflies LIVE!,” Laslett presented REVLAR as an alternative to Sintra and lamination. Laslett describes the butterfly exhibit as “lovely and lush,” mirroring the conditions of a tropical rain forest—and making it difficult to determine the right type of signage to use. Within the exhibit itself, photographs and information about each type of butterfly are presented on information sheets attached to a “reading rail” for visitors to view, and in recent years, curators had created the information sheets for these reading rails using lamination.

“Unlike other ‘temporary’ signs used across the garden, signage in the butterfly exhibit changes frequently to describe whichever butterflies currently inhabit the environment. This makes using Sintra impractical, but laminated signs were time consuming to produce and didn’t hold up to the conditions, even when they were covered with plex,” Laslett explains. “We purchase our butterfly chrysalises from brokers who work with butterfly farmers in South America or Asia. These chrysalises are harvested from within enclosures in the regional rainforests and then shipped to brokers, so our orders can vary according to which chrysalises the farmers collect. This means that signage changes as new butterflies are released into the exhibit.”

When everyone agreed to try REVLAR in the butterfly exhibit, Laslett requested additional samples from Relyco, and curators began printing the butterfly information sheets on the waterproof paper. “The pictures and text printed on REVLAR are very crisp, and the curators really appreciate the overall appearance,” Laslett continues. “Plus, the thickness of the REVLAR adds to its durability. The REVLAR sheets attach easily to the reading rails with Velcro dots, and there is no need to protect REVLAR with plex as we had to do with the laminated sheets. The signs can be wiped clean if needed, we haven’t experienced any fading or problems with mildew, and they’re far less labor-intensive to produce than lamination. REVLAR really is an ideal solution for our application.”

In a second application for REVLAR at “Butterflies LIVE!,” curators printed each information sheet at a quarter of its original size; these smaller pages were attached to a key ring to form a small booklet visitors can read as they move through the exhibit. “The print quality we’ve seen with REVLAR was so great that we could simply create a smaller version of each information sheet; the pictures were still vibrant and the text was completely legible,” Laslett says. “As information sheets change or are replaced, we just swap them out in the booklets.”

Laslett and her colleagues are looking for other applications for REVLAR across the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, where she imagines it could be a valuable addition to a range of garden sites.

About Relyco: For 30 years, Relyco has been the premier supplier of unique and innovative paper products. Our products are great for thousands of uses, which enables you to get the most value out of your printer investment. Understanding and meeting our clients’ needs is always our first priority.