



Around your workplace

Be green on the job!

Written by Sheila Lim - 30 August 2006

Is work driving you crazy?

One good way to stop hyperventilating and going green in the face from stress is to have some houseplants in your workspace. If you're a member of the elite management force, of course, you could hire a landscaping professional to create pockets of greenery, or even a garden with water features on office premises. It could be one of the wisest decisions you've ever made, as you'll keep overworked employees sane and healthier, and thus improve productivity.

Plants are good for you!

Extensive research has shown that houseplants relax us, alleviate stress and increase our general well-being.

According to leading European garden designer Nico Wissing, green is proven to reduce stress. Wissing, who made a name for himself in the field of therapeutic gardens, says that research in the Netherlands over a 15-year period yielded these findings: hospital patients, children with attention deficit disorder (ADD) and students were able to concentrate better and all showed marked improvement in their recovery or performance after regular contact with nature.

His own work has also benefited senile-dementia patients - the therapeutic gardens alleviate the patients' feelings of loss or helplessness when memory fails or proves defective. They also activate the senses: colourful flowers catch the eye and create a sense of cheer. Scented ones perfume the air.

Studies conducted by Dr Tove Fjeld, University of Agriculture, Norway, have also indicated that indoor plants can reduce fatigue, coughs, sore throats and other cold-related illnesses by more than 30 per cent.

Plants are a breath of fresh air

Wissing adds: "Studies have shown that trees planted alongside motorways reduce the effects of the emission of harmful gases by between 20 and 30 per cent. More green in residential areas not only means an improvement in air quality, but also in noise pollution."

Research by NASA scientists has also found common indoor plants to be valuable weapons in the fight against indoor pollution. These

plants are surprisingly effective in absorbing harmful gases and cleaning indoor air.

Sources of airborne pollution in the office are chemical substances like formaldehyde, benzene and carbon monoxide, present in office furnishings (plywood, particle boards, glue, synthetic fibres, plastic), carpeting, cleaning products, inks and tobacco smoke. Some indoor plants most effective in removing such toxic air pollutants are:

- Bamboo Palm (Chamaedorea Seifritzii)
- Chinese Evergreen (Aglaonema Modestum)
- English Ivy (Hedera Helix)
- Gerbera Daisy (Gerbera Jamesonii)
- Marginata (Dracaena Marginata)
- Mass cane/Corn Plant (Dracaena Massangeana)
- Mother-in-Law's Tongue (Sansevieria Laurentii)
- Peace Lily (Spathiphyllum "Mauna Loa")

Start going green!

In short, these findings tell us that having more greenery around is beneficial to your health, your colleague's health, and even the health of the company and economy.

Since most of us spend so much time at the office, we'd be mad to ignore these refreshing ways of surviving the corporate jungle. If you have a barren, boring workstation, it's time to start planting your very own therapeutic patch of green!

[Please feel free to share the URL of this article with your friends and colleagues.](#)



Copyright © 2007 Singapore Press Holdings Ltd. Co. Regn. No. 198402868E. All rights