

Introduction: The Hire Plants Design Guide

Hire Plants have been installing and maintaining plants in commercial interior settings for 40 years.

Our depth of experience and focus on customers enables us to provide flexible, innovative and sustainable planting solutions.

Having designed, installed and maintained interior plantscapes of all types and sizes over many years, we enjoy sharing our knowledge, experience and passion for plants to help people enhance their environments and create 'plantscapes with purpose'.



This guide is designed to help designers and facilities managers understand and consider the key factors which contribute to successfully using plants in commercial interiors.

Good reasons to use plants in commercial interior design

1. Emotional

Biophilia is the idea that humans possess an innate tendency to seek connections with nature.

"Biophilic Design can reduce stress, enhance creativity and clarity of thought, improve our well-being and expedite healing; in today's urban lifestyle these qualities are ever so important"¹

In our built environments, people are becoming increasingly disconnected from experiences and exposure to nature. More and more, the presence of live plants in our everyday indoor settings is providing that link to our innate need. This positively rubs off on our overall impression of the places where we spend time.

Improved mental engagement and overall happiness are reportedly realised by visual connections with nature. Reconnecting people with nature through biophilic design plays a role in our improved health and well-being.

¹ 14 Patterns of Biophilic Design Improving Health & Well-Being in the Built Environment, 2014 Terrapin Bright Green LLC

In spaces such as waiting areas, hospitality areas and open plan offices, where the volume of people fluctuates, plants, literally bring 'consistency of life' to an area and help create a more stable and consistent impression of an environment, regardless of the number of people and level of energy present.

Studies have shown that:

*"Offices with very high results for perceived productivity, health, and overall comfort of the work area [presented] a human-centered approach to interior design [...] and implemented biophilic design principles"*²



The use of plants and green features such as vertical gardens and walls are key to improving spatial comfort and overall satisfaction. In open plan offices they allow workers to work more efficiently and help with the balance of collaborative working and the need for work tasks requiring privacy and concentration.

Looking to hospitality, today's customers are looking for a more customised experience, millennials more specifically, who will make up the three quarters of the workforce by 2025 are especially sensitive to memorable moments. They value and seek experiences that go above and beyond the usual service which is no longer enough to create loyal guests.

*"Biophilic design and décor are strong factors to create memorable guest experiences and therefore should be a main driver in design choices for the hospitality industry."*³

Hospitality venues that can support a feeling of escape, comfort and socialisation with plants will likely encourage longer dwell times and support better guest experiences that will lead to increased revenues.

Wellness is the focus of all trends, and biophilic design supports a multisensory experience that takes wellness to the next level for its guests. The presence of green features will emphasize the natural connections guests are craving.

2. Practical

One plant many purposes

As well as the enjoyment benefits for people, the use of plants in interior commercial design can simultaneously serve a number of practical purposes, making them a versatile component in achieving design objectives.

- **Entrances & Wayfinding.** The placement of plants acts as a useful visual cue to direct human movement. From making it obvious where an entrance is to creating a demarcation between thoroughfares and circulation areas, plants can signal where people should move and directs

² The Rise of Office Design in High-Performance, Open-Plan Environments, Buildings 2019

³ Human Spaces 2.0: Biophilic Design in Hospitality report

sight lines.

- **Screening & Soft partitioning.** The irregular outlines and mixed density of foliage means that as a screen or partition, plants effectively create a visual barrier as needed without being overly dense or completely obstructive. They can also effectively absorb and deflect a level of sound.
- **Branding.** The use of plants, and planters can support branding directly (through the use of container design and colour), and indirectly through association with nature and greenery.
- **Styling:** Whether formal, contemporary, industrial or informal. The design style of a space is complimented with plants and containers. Container options can make plants fit into any situation. Simply making a place more appealing to be in encourages everything from customer experience and general enjoyment to team interaction and staff satisfaction.

In the case of floor standing plant installations, the added benefit of being moveable provides the versatility to adapt to changing requirements of different spaces.

What makes a good plantscape?

When using plants within interior commercial design, some of the elements which go into a good plantscape and make it effective in the long term include:

- **Achieves a purpose.** Having a clear reason for using plants is the first place to start. This purpose is understood by asking 'what will people be doing in this area?', 'how do they want to feel?', 'what practical requirements need to be met with the use of plants?'
- **Adds to people's experience.** Whether it is for customers, general public or employees, thinking about how the plants add to people's enjoyment ensures that plants are well located for maximum visual and practical benefit.
- **Is sustainable.** Plant choices need to ensure that the plants will thrive and will be cost effective in the long term. The ongoing investment of maintaining plants (correlating with volume) also needs to be sustainable from a client's perspective.
- **Consistent quality and presentation.** Continuity of quality and presentation is important in maintaining the overall impact of plants. One of the big advantages of hiring plants is that their replacement is usually included in the hire pricing meaning plants are more likely to be swapped faster and won't be left in an unhealthy state.
- **Minimal disruption to maintain.** Thought needs to be given to how and when plants will be serviced and maintained. Health and safety requirements may mean that access to plants at height for instance may need to take place when other people aren't around.



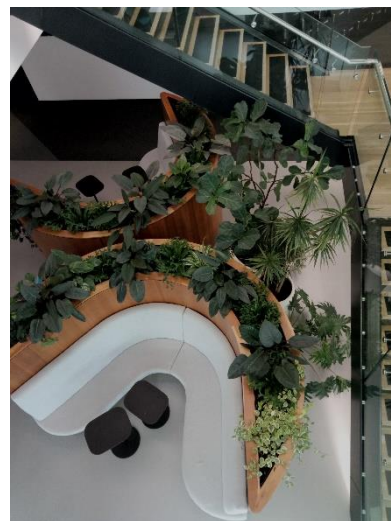
Practical Considerations when planning / designing indoor plantscapes

When planning the use of plants in interior commercial design, giving thought to a number of practical considerations ensures that a planting design is workable and fit for purpose.

1. Planter size

The most often overlooked consideration in interior plantscape design is what the plants need to grow in. Adequate space for the grow containers and sub irrigation needs to be allowed for. Larger plants need more soil for a healthy root system to develop, to retain adequate water between service visits, and to remain upright and stable.

With the exception of large interior gardens, indoor plants are generally kept in their growing containers which are then staged inside the decorative planter. While space needs to be allowed for these separate containers, it provides for healthier plants and makes plants easier to exchange as required.



2. Watering considerations

How plants are watered needs to be understood in considering placement and design of plantscapes. Planters need to be waterproofed, and generally a liner or sub irrigation system that the plant sits in inside the planter or presentation container is used. For watering this allows the plant access to enough water between servicing visits and also protects other interior elements from water damage.

If larger interior installations such as plant walls and interior gardens are to be run on an automated irrigation system, water connection points and drainage need to also be considered.

3. Growing conditions

Various conditions will impact plant choices. Plants vary in their tolerance of shade, natural light levels, strong sunlight, temperature and exposure to wind. Hire Plants can advise on plant varieties that are best suited to conditions and match the design brief.

Simply being indoors is enough for many varieties of plants (such as fruit trees and most natives) to rapidly deteriorate, drop leaves and become diseased.

4. Other environmental effects

Other environmental effects such as proximity to heaters and vents, opening hours (e.g. closed with the lights off all day) can impact the effectiveness of plants and can be worked through during the design phase.

5. Accessibility

Accessibility for installation of plants can sometimes be overlooked. While in some situations height equipment can be used, in other situations stair and lift access may limit the size of what can initially be installed. Once installed, access for servicing and swapping plants is needed to provide the care and maintenance necessary.

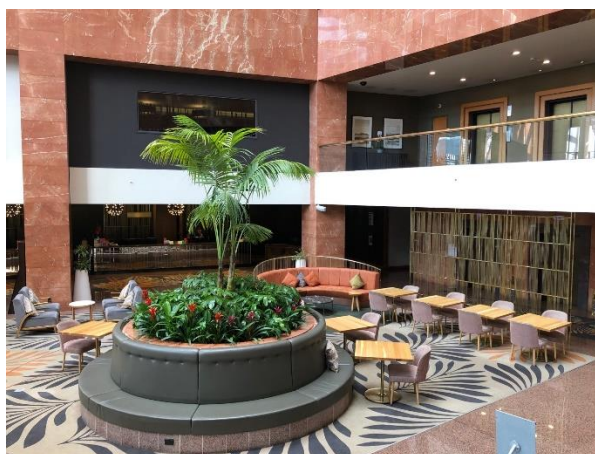
6. Availability

Plants need to be suited to the New Zealand environment. There are some restrictions on what is available and what can be imported into New Zealand. Increasingly stricter importation quarantine and inspection requirements has meant that some previously available plant types are no longer

available in New Zealand.

To move forward on using plants in your interior commercial design:

- Involve us early in your planning and concept phase
- Contact us with your plans for pricing estimates and design input
- Check out our catalogue and website; www.hireplants.com
- Request a product outline
- Follow us on Instagram; [#hireplantsnz](https://www.instagram.com/hireplantsnz)
- Visit our nursery and check out our extensive stock; **92 Eastdale Rd, Avondale**
- Invite us in to talk to your design / facilities team



Design concepts and project showcase

Floor standing plants	Tambours, bowls, table tops
Raised containers	Custom containers
Groupings / mixed heights and textures	Plant Walls
Grid Frames	Wires
Inbuilt planters and gardens	Trailing & Hanging
Artificial	

Hire Plants is a member of the New Zealand Green Building Council, the Sustainable Business Network and the Designers Institute, we aim to bring, among other things, innovative and sustainable solutions to the industry.



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