



I-Plants Magazine

Keep Your Plants Thriving
10 Steps To A Happy Customer
The Right Plant for the Right Place

BIOPHILIC
DESIGNAWARDS
2023

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I-Plants Magazine Edition #24 - SPRING Issue 2023



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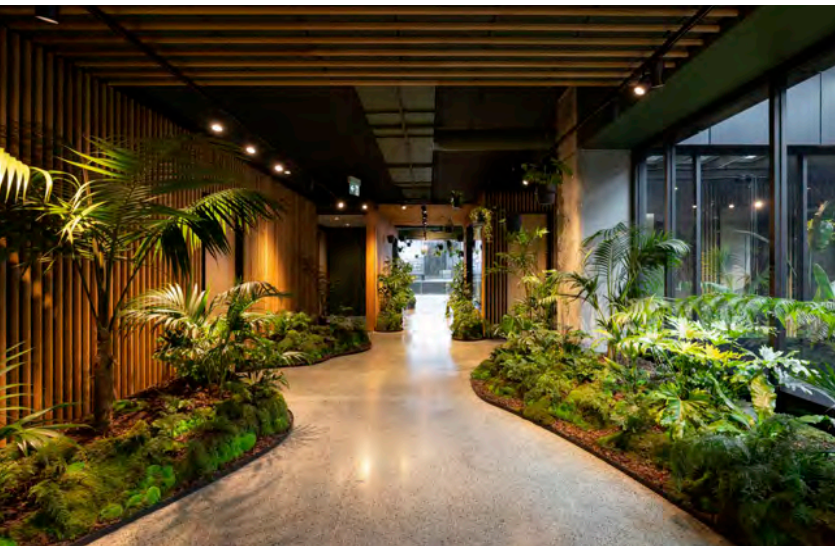
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plants@work



BIOPHILIC
DESIGNAWARDS
2023

***Now Accepting entries
until May 31, 2023!***



PRO TIPS

Pro Tip! In the photo description area of the 5 to 8 pictures you can upload, use this space to describe the story behind the picture from a biophilic design point of view hitting on the topics listed in the judges criteria. This will help make your entry very clear to the judges on how to score your project.

Give yourself 1-2 days to write your entry!

Click ink [here](#) to view the judge's form!



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- 1 full page inside cover ad in I-Plants Magazine (Biophilic Design Awards Edition) Ad Value - \$800
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- I-Plants Magazine Facebook & Instagram recognition with your business logo as the exclusive GOLD SPONSOR (July) Value \$100
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WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE **BIOPHILIC DESIGN AWARDS** AND **INTERNATIONAL PLANTSCAPE AWARDS**?



BIOPHILIC
DESIGN AWARDS
2023



INTERNATIONAL
PLANTSCAPE
. A W A R D S .



We have received several questions from readers asking about **"What is the difference between the two awards programs; the **Biophilic Design Awards** and the **International Plantscape Awards** that we are currently promoting throughout the I-Plants Magazine?"**. So what is the difference? Please read on to learn more.

When we first took ownership of I-Plants Magazine it already had an awards program named the '*International Design Contest*'.

With my past experience with International Plantscape Awards being the awards chair for multiple years, and now owning both awards programs, we felt it was best to re-brand the *International Design Contest* to what is now known as the **Biophilic Design Awards** program, with a judging focus on biophilic design attributes for plantscaping projects. The reason for the change was both awards programs had some overlap, and we wanted to create as much diversity with each awards program as possible. As for now we are continuing to offer the two awards programs to the plantscaping industry, which operate six months apart from each other. Companies can pick and choose what program best fits their needs and marketing initiatives. The industry still has two accolades to obtain along with still having the Plantscape Hall of Fame.

A big thank you to all of the applicants & sponsors to these awards programs. Your support has truly made both awards programs a great success, and your continued support will help keep these programs alive and well for future plantscapers to be recognized for their talent and hard work.

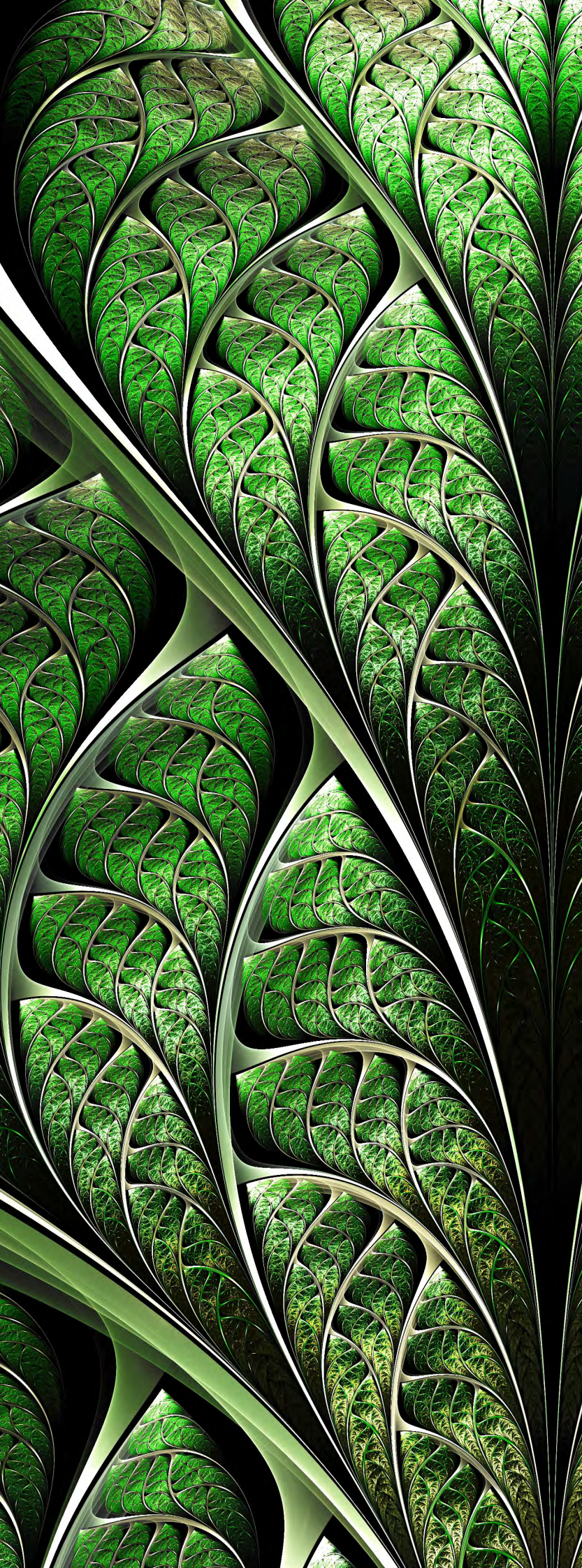
Differences at a quick glance.

Biophilic Design Awards

1. All categories judged under the same criteria – Criteria is based on Biophilic Design principals and entries should be written to reflect these principals that these principles are present.
2. Winning entries receive a plaque shipped directly to them.
3. Profile in the Biophilic Design Awards magazine issue.
4. Biophilic Design awards winner logos with year for use in promotional materials.
5. Profile on I-Plants Magazines social media accounts.
6. Judged independantly by a panel of three industry experts in the field of Plantscaping & Biophilic Design as to how it relates to Interior Plantscaping.

International Plantscape Awards

1. 15 different categories all related to the plantscaping industries best practices & design.
2. Several categories have different criteria on which they are judged.
3. In-person charity awards gala event held at TPIE. Fort Lauderdale in Jan 2024!
4. Glass award with winning company logo presented to companies that attend the awards gala. Those that do not attend will have their award shipped to them.
5. Profile in the International Plantscape Awards Issue
6. International Plantscape Awards winner logo for use in promotional materials.
7. Profile on I-Plants Magazine's social media accounts.
8. Judged independantly by a panel of three industry experts in the field of Interior Plantscaping
9. There are no "association" fees attached to entering into this program as there was in the past.



BIOPHILIC DESIGN AWARDS 2023

With the guidance of Sonja Bochart, who was volunteering her expertise with Green Plants for Green Buildings (GPGB) at the time, we developed the scoring criteria that we felt best represented for the **Biophilic Design Awards** design principals that should be found in the plantscaping projects. GPGB for many years now has been marketing biophilia and biophilic design information and knowledge to its members.

With the newly coined term that our industry was adopting, I felt it would be great for companies to be recognized for their understanding of biophilic design. Biophilic design is a separate design component of plantscaping projects and is reflected in the judging criteria.

Plantscapers need to prove their understanding of how these design principals are integrated into their projects and be able to present that to the judges in their entry.

This is difference between the **Biophilic Design Awards competition and the International Plantscape Awards competition, which is based on “plantscaping” best practices and design principals.**



BIOPHILIC
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2022

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I N T E R N A T I O N A L
PLANTSCAPE
. A W A R D S .

2023

The **International Plantscape Awards** was gracefully passed to us by American Hort just after the public launch of the **Biophilic Design Awards**. Due to unforeseen circumstances of the pandemic, American Hort changed their mandate to focus on education and thus wanted to transfer the awards program and Plantscape Hall of Fame to someone that could actively run it right away. We accepted bringing on the International Plantscape Awards, never having planned to offer two awards programs which is what we have today. However, one thing to keep in mind is that there have been two awards programs run each year for many years. The International Plantscape Awards and the International Design Contest. One advantage the International Design Contest had was the ability to showcase the projects in the magazine to a worldwide audience.

The International Plantscape Awards had previously run its awards gala at the Plantscape Industry Alliance (P.I.A.) conference in Las Vegas, NV mid summer and then moved to Columbus, OH when American Hort received ownership of the P.I.A. assets. American Hort ran the awards gala in the summertime from 2014-2019, I was involved all those years helping behind the scenes selecting judges and helping with any guidance they may need. I personally have been directly involved with the International Plantscape Awards since 2011 when Cherie Ratay passed the awards chair role to me while the awards program was still at P.I.A. In 2011 the program was named the Plantscape Industry Alliance awards or P.I.A. awards. I rebranded the program to the International Plantscape Awards to better reflect the international reach of the program as well as bringing in the “Plantscaping” name to help the program tie in better with the branding of the organization as well as differentiate the program as



a bit more than just interior landscaping. The program covers some exterior containerized projects, outdoor green walls, etc. As previously mentioned, the International Plantscape Awards did not have a magazine attached to it to showcase the projects as it does now. Bringing the program into I-Plants Magazine finally created a platform for us to continue to share and promote the amazing projects of the companies that enter and are awarded. We have readership in several countries, which includes the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Sweden, New Zealand, Australia, China, France, Belgium, Norway, Germany, Singapore, South Africa, Dubai, and Argentina to name a few. These awards programs are open to companies around the world and have had the diamond judges awards go to winning projects in the United Kingdom, New Zealand, the United States and also Canada in the last two and a half years.

An opportunity arose after we took ownership of the International Plantscape Awards and the Plantscape Hall of Fame to have the in-person awards gala brought to TPIE for the first time. Dr. Joe Cialone connected us with Linda Reindl, and we have now been able to run the awards gala event



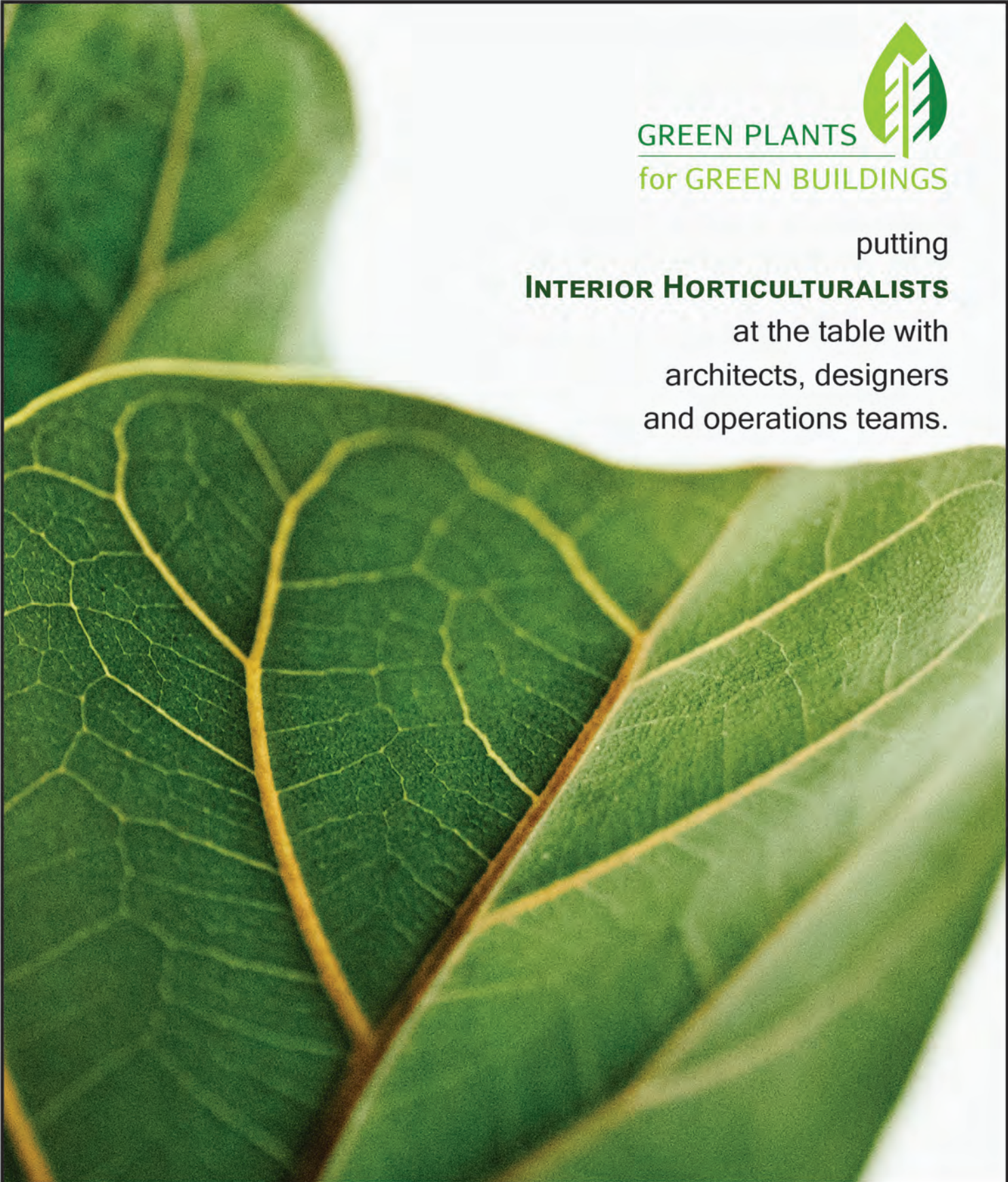
INTERNATIONAL
PLANTSCAPE
.HALL OF FAME.

at TPIE with the generous help and support of the National Horticulture Foundation and Florida Nursery, Growers and Landscape Association (FNGLA). **The awards gala event in now a charity gala event supporting industry initiatives such as the newly formed GPGB Interior Industry Growth Fund (IGF).**

Fast forward to 2023 and we had our most successful event to date, and we were able to raise proceeds of \$20,000 USD for Green Plants for Green Buildings Interior Initiative Growth Fund to help create sustainability for the future of this industry we all love. We are proud that we also donate 10% of the proceeds from each award entry to the IIGF.

The 2024 International Plantscape Awards program is accepting entries July 1st, 2023 with the deadline submission date of September 15th, 2023. And the International Plantscape Award Gala event is taking place on January 18th, 2024 at TPIE in Fort Lauderdale, FL.





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KEEP YOUR PLANTS THRIVING! IMPROVE PLANT HEALTH WITH SUB-IRRIGATION.

BY: JEAN-PIERRE SIJMONS
MAKING THE WORLD A GREENER PLACE.

It can be a challenge to keep indoor plants healthy. One solution to help keep plants healthy and save time involves using sub-irrigation hereby, you water plants from the bottom up. Some advantages of using sub-irrigation for indoor plants are.

1. Consistent Watering: One of the biggest advantages of sub-irrigation is that it provides consistent watering for your plants. Unlike

traditional watering methods, which can be inconsistent and lead to over or under-watering, sub-irrigation ensures that your plants receive a steady supply of water.

2. Reduced Water Usage: Sub-irrigation can also help reduce water usage, as water is absorbed directly by the plant's roots and doesn't evaporate as quickly as it would with traditional watering methods. This can

be particularly beneficial for those who live in areas with water restrictions or who want to conserve water.

3. Prevents Soil Compaction: When you water from the top, the force of the water can cause the soil to become compacted over time, which can make it difficult for roots to grow and absorb nutrients. With sub-irrigation, water is absorbed from the bottom, which helps prevent soil compaction.

4. Reduced Risk of Disease and pests: Another advantage of sub-irrigation is that it can reduce the risk of plant diseases and pests. When you water from the top, excess water can pool on the surface of the soil, creating a damp environment conducive to the growth of fungi, other pathogens and some pests like fungus gnats. Sub-irrigation helps prevent this by keeping the surface of the soil dry.



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By Carolyn Goodin, CLP-I

The Right Plant for the Right Place

We have been speaking about the importance of light from many perspectives. May I add one more perspective? This is preparing the plants you've selected for the environment into which these plants will be placed. High, medium and low light conditions are only half the information you need before the plants are placed in a project.

Besides knowing the given light conditions, one must ascertain how and where your selections have been grown. Sometimes growers will place plants in full sun.

This is a ploy, for example, specimen trees, are grown in full sun to attain desired height and girth of trunks and branches. Alright, you've found the perfect specimen. It has been grown in perhaps, 12,000ft. candles of light for a number of years. Indoor light, even high light may only be one tenth as bright. Hum? Well, if the tree is destined for the great outdoors, then no problem, right? It will happily continue to grow as it did in the nursery.



BUT what, if this tree is going into an atrium with a glass roof, or perhaps it is to be placed by a tall window which receives sun from early morning through early afternoon? What is the exposure of such a window? Assuming you are in the northern hemisphere, your compass reading should say East South East. Perfect, yes? Unfortunately, this is not perfect. Why? The answer is simply, our example has been adapted to full sun. What can be done about that? This large beauty must be acclimatized.

What is the difference between adaptation and acclimatization? Most plants in nature are adapted to the environment in which they are growing. They grow well and thrive providing they are not subject to harsh weather. However, take them out of their growing environment and put them into a different environment, some may adapt while others may fail. Mainly we are speaking about radical changes in the light levels.

If the light levels are radically different, i.e., taken from full sun to indoor light, even high light, we may see major defoliation. In some cases, this will be beyond the ability of the plant to recover. In such instances, plants will need to be acclimatized. Acclimatization by definition, is the slow adaptation of plants from one light level to another. Emphasis is on the word slow. It can take many months, to adapt plants from high light to indoor lighting. As a result, acclimatized plants will cost more because of the extra care and greenhouse space required to do this correctly.



During the acclimatization process, plants undergo physiological and morphological changes that allow them to adapt to lower light conditions. Growing in full sun, the plant has adapted to strong light. The morphology is such that it filters out excess light with the primary purpose to prevent solarization of the chlorophyll. Solarization is the literal burning of chlorophyll, giving the leaves a greyish to black color. At what point does the chlorophyll burn?

The occurrence of burning is species and variety dependent. The point at which chlorophyll burns is called the saturation point. If the plant reaches its saturation point, it can no longer filter out

excessive light. It will get a sunburn. Plants with sunburn will lose the burned leaves, which will eventually, senesce and die. The problem here is that dying leaves are susceptible to fungal and bacterial infections. Systemic infections will kill the entire plant if corrective measures are not taken.

Thus, plants growing in full sun are adapted to filter out excessive light. What happens if we put a plant, adapted to filter out excessive light, into an essentially low light environment? It will continue to filter out light based on its full sun morphology. The next step is that the plant cannot sustain in this new environment and begins to drop the leaves it cannot support.

The best example is the Ficus Benjamin. This is the variety which was studied in the early phases of research on acclimatization. Researchers knew the Ficus Benjamin was notorious for dropping leaves when placed indoors and therefore was a poor choice. However, the plant was very popular and in demand. Consumer remarks such as: "Yes, the plant drops leaves, but after new ones grow back, it stops dropping and grows beautifully for a very long time.", with one caveat, that if one should move the plant to a slightly lower lighting situation, the plant would defoliate again!

So, what's up with that? Upon observation of the leaves which abscised from the sun grown plants, it was noticed that the leaves which fell off did not senesce before abscission occurred. In other words, they didn't slowly turn yellow and die, but were actually falling off green! Healthy green leaves fell off, but why? Further observation of the Ficus leaves showed



that the newly grown replacement leaves were longer, wider, and thinner. The waxy coating of the leaf called the cuticle, was also thinner than its counterpart. The entire morphology of these new leaves had changed. It was then, extrapolated that the Ficus was adapting to a new light level, and in doing so, actually changed the structure of its leaves! How incredible is that!

Now, we form a hypothesis: In the adaptation process of Ficus Benjamin trees, the plant changes its leaf structure in order to adapt to lower light conditions. The comparative study of the size, shape and thickness of sun grown leaves vs. shade grown leaves, indicated that sun grown leaves are "designed" to filter out light, while shade grown leaves are "designed" to collect more light. The darker green color is indicative of the plant producing more chloroplasts containing chlorophyll, which are closer to the surface of the leaf, than its counterpart. Low light adapted leaves have fewer cell layers, but are wider to compensate for leaf area lost by being thinner. Now think about what would happen to a plant adapted to shade if it were placed out in full sun. The low light morphology plant is designed to collect more light. If placed back into full sun, the plant will continue to allow more light in, because its morphology can no longer filter out excessive light. This will be disastrous! Solarization will happen quickly.

Left: Ficus showing signs of stress during acclimation

Below: Ficus showing new growth after acclimating



Never put a shade adapted plant back into full sun! Acclimatization is, in essence, a one way process.

What a remarkable find! Can all plants do this? Of course, this led to further studies, with extraordinary results. My love for plants is coupled with respect and admiration. The plant kingdom is and should be revered for its ability to change, adapt and survive.

How has this knowledge helped to advance our industry? Quite obviously, the increase in the number of choices we have in plant varieties was extremely positive. Next time we will explore the science behind acclimatization. With the invention of the electron microscope, we now have visual proof of what happens during acclimatization. Until next time keep learning, stay well and STAY Professional!



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TEN STEPS TO A HAPPY CUSTOMER: CUSTOMER SERVICE FOR INTERIOR PLANTSCAPE TECHNICIANS

By Kathy Johnson Fediw, LEED AP ID+C, CLP, CLT

In ANY economy, no business can afford to lose a customer. Even with a great sales team, your company will not grow if you are losing existing customers as fast--or faster-- than you are gaining new ones. As horticultural technicians and front-line employees, you are the key person responsible for keeping your customers happy. You are the one person your customers see and interact with each week. The best way to keep your customers happy is to make them feel im-

portant, and to show them your respect. Everything you do should show that you know how important they are and that you respect them as professionals and as individuals. When these two needs are met, your customers will appreciate everything you do to keep their plants healthy and beautiful. There are many things you can do to make customers feel important and respected that don't cost a dime. Here are ten suggestions to get you started.

1. Your plants must look great all the time. You have a job because your customers are paying for you to keep their plants looking like new. They don't want to have to worry about their plants—they have more important and urgent work to do. So they are counting on you to use your expertise to take care of their plants. Your customers don't want to have to wait more than a couple of days for a replacement plant to be delivered. They don't want you to turn their office into a “plant hospital” as you try to nurse a sick plant back to health. If their plants are sickly or dying, nothing else you do will make them happy. If, on the other hand, they see beautiful, lush, green, thriving plants, they will be ecstatic and excited to see you each time you visit. You'll also make your client look good to her boss and to their visitors. Making the customer look good is what it's all about.



2. Get to know your customer by name. Call your customer by name whenever you are talking with him. Use his last name (Mr. Garcia) until he gives you permission to call him by his first name. This shows respect for your customer and that you have a genuine interest in meeting his needs. When you use a person's name, you are telling them that you think they are important enough for you to remember and that you recognize them as an individual, not a number or piece of paper. A person's name holds power—use it!

Likewise, wear a name tag if possible so your customer will get to know your name, too (talk with your supervisor if you don't have one since each company's policy is different.) Your customer will feel more comfortable talking with you if he or she knows your name. Just your first name is all that's needed. If your customer uses security badges, be sure to wear it at each visit.

3. Respect your customer's time and her busy schedule. Your client has her own job to do. She is very busy with far too much work and much too little time. A few words of greeting and a sentence or two of friendly chit-chat is as much as she has time for most days.

She doesn't have time to hear about the trouble your kids are having at school or details about your medical condition. You have a business relationship with her and need to respect her schedule and time.

4. Respect your client's workspace. Most companies have made a sizeable investment in providing a comfortable workspace for their employees, including the plants you take care of. Carpeting, furniture, computers, artwork and wall finishes can cost big bucks, especially for high-end businesses. One desk or computer may cost as much as one or two months of your salary! Your customer is depending on you to treat her property with care and to protect her investment. The extra care you take, such as using drop cloths, covering computers, and moving valuable papers out of the way while you work, shows your customer that you value her investment. She will appreciate the extra care you take on her behalf.

5. Respect your client's need to concentrate. You should do your work quietly and unobtrusively, interrupting her work as little as possible. Turn your cell phone to mute. If you get a phone call, tell your caller to

wait one moment and walk quickly to an isolated area or outside before you start your conversation. Always speak quietly when answering your phone in a voice just barely louder than a whisper. At no time should you have a long, drawn-out conversation in a client's work-space—it's much too disruptive. Never answer a phone call while you are talking with a customer face to face—that's very rude and sends the message "you're not important to me." All personal calls should be kept brief and to the point.

6. Protect your customer from any accidents. Be alert to the people around you. Keep aisles clear and clutter-free. Try to limit your use of pesticides. Whenever necessary, use pesticides during off hours or in isolated but well-ventilated areas. You never want a client to have an accident or get sick because of something you did or failed to do. Good safety practices will help keep you healthy and injury-free, too.

7. Be consistently reliable. Your clients look forward to seeing you! They will come to expect to see you every Tuesday at 9:00 AM sharp, or whatever your schedule happens to be. They will worry about you



Keep the
**CUSTOMER
HAPPY**

**SERVICE
with a
SMILE**



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OPINION

Increase customer
LOYALTY



Continuously improve
**CUSTOMER
EXPERIENCE**



Increase customer
SATISFACTION



**CUSTOMER
SERVICE**



if you are late or miss a day of f you come on Monday one week, then Wednesday the next week, then Saturday morning your customer will think that he can't count on you to be there for him. He won't trust you anymore as he tries to figure out what is going on. If you have a vacation planned, notify your client the week before that someone else will be covering for you and may come on a different day or at a different time. Your customer will also trust you more and feel respected if you keep your promises. Be careful that you only make promises that you know you can keep. If you promise a customer that her plant will be delivered tomorrow, you better be prepared to deliver it yourself if something goes wrong!

8. Be an ambassador for your client. When you are working at your customer's workplace, you are representing two companies: the one you work for and are paid by; and your customer's company. Both your boss and your customer work hard and invest money in presenting a professional image; and how you look is a part of that image. No, you do not have to be a beauty queen or wear designer clothes. But you should start the day looking neat, clean and pressed. Wear your uniform—it is part of the image. Your uniform also identifies you as a vendor who has a legitimate reason for being on the premises, and uniforms and name badges are important for security reasons.

Looking well-groomed shows your client that you respect their business culture and standards. Your clients will also respect you more if you look like the professional you are. You may not be as fresh at the end of the day as you were at the beginning and that is understandable. If you have "grubby" work to do (such as an installation or heavy pruning) you may want to schedule it for the end of your day, or bring along a set of clean clothes to change into when you are finished. If you are working in a lobby, shopping mall or other public area, know as much as you can about where things are located. People will ask you for directions to the elevators, restrooms, etc. Being a little knowledgeable enables you to work with your client to make visitors feel welcomed, and what's important to your client should be important to you, too.

9. Really listen to what your clients have to say to you. When they are talking with you, give them 100% of your attention and make strong eye contact. Take notes if you need to follow up on any requests. Whenever a client requests something of you, they are telling you "This is important to me." After a short while, you will get to know each of your clients so well that you can start anticipating what they need before they ask for it. Be proactive and tell them what you have planned for them, rather than waiting for them to ask.

10. Act quickly. Consider any request, comment, or criticism from a client to be urgent and important. Jump on it and call your supervisor right away. You may be able to get an answer for your client before you leave the account if you act quickly. In today's fast-paced business world, your client expects a quick response and will appreciate you when you are able to quickly respond to their needs. Remember that any requests, complaints, or criticism are your client's way of telling you what is important to them. Instead of taking their comments personally, listen for the message behind the comments.

Then respond quickly to their needs. If you respect your client and make them feel important, you'll find that you have very few complaints and some really wonderful people to work with. You'll enjoy your job more and will look forward to each day. And when something does go wrong, your clients won't be angry because you've done the work to develop a strong relationship with them and they know they can trust you to make it right.



INTERNATIONAL INTERIOR LANDSCAPE DAY

We couldn't let this day go by without sending out a release to spread the word even further. So congratulations to all who have been nominated to be recognised for their service to the industry.

What is International Interior Landscaper Day?

International Interior Landscaper Day is plants@work's brand-new initiative in cooper-

ation with American and Australian partners and is designed to celebrate all interior landscaping professionals.

This year the day was celebrated on Wednesday, April 19, 2023, **and in the future on the 3rd Wednesday in April.**

People perform best when they feel appreciated. Feeling appreciated and valued can uplift moods, affect our performance and make us feel more connected to our work, and bring out the very



19 April 2023

Happy
International
Interior Landscaper
Day



best in us. Knowing that others value what we do can encourage us to improve our performance even more. According to the Gallup Institute, both meaningful public and private recognition are bigger motivational perks than being given a promotion, bonus, or raise.

So, we're shouting about people working in the interior landscaping industry.

We asked plants@work members to nominate those in their teams who they felt should be acknowledged on this special day. Knowing how dedicated interior landscapers are, we weren't surprised to receive 29 nominations.

These nominated team members will all have received a badge to acknowledge their dedication and we are looking forward to images of those honoured being photographed going about their daily jobs on International Interior Landscaper Day, 19 April, wearing their badges and appearing on social media!

THE 2024 INTERNATIONAL INTERIOR LANDSCAPE DAY IS WEDNESDAY APRIL 17, 2024

plants@work

plants@work and its members will use social media to talk about their hardworking teams, their passion for the industry and plants; to find out more or join the conversation please use **#InteriorLandscaperDay**.

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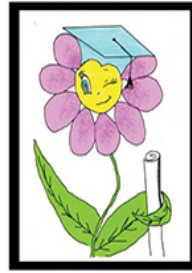
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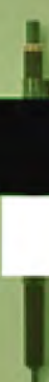


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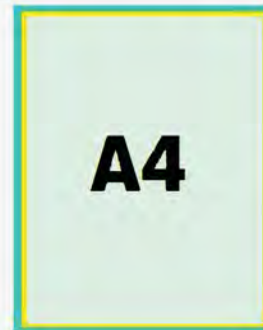
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