



Stress Busting Plants Reduce Staff Illness

Pat Fox of Aralia Garden Design demonstrates how you can improve your bottom line by introducing an indoor greening policy.

IT IS that time of the year once again. Colds, coughs and sore throats abound and it often seems to be the most often used excuse, for absence in the work place. So what can you do to reduce this seasonal problem? One of the easiest ways to improve the health of your staff is to introduce a range of indoor plants into your office environment.

It has been scientifically proven that the introduction of plants can reduce many symptoms, such as tiredness, coughing, sore throats and cold related illnesses, particularly pertinent when personnel are spending significant chunks of their day inside. Research took place in Norway in the late 90s (University of Agriculture 1994-1996) that proved that staff, which had plants in their offices, had a drop of around 25% in tiredness, coughing, sore throats and cold related illnesses. Coughs individually were reduced by 38%, fatigue by 32% and headaches by a staggering 45%. Eight out of 10 staff also stated "I feel good when there are plants in the office", with again eight out of 10 stating that

they would like to see more plants in the office in future.

The reasons for this are many. Plants help to purify the air by removing chemicals from the air; they absorb noise and lessen dust particles, which can cause irritation. They lower blood pressure leading to improved concentration and improved memory. They also promote a feeling of well being, providing a calmer, more relaxing environment.

Companies should be looking to take on board the benefit of greening their indoor space. Companies such as Aralia Garden Design can offer specialist advice to ensure that the correct plants are chosen, in terms of maximising air improvement, correct environmental conditions (i.e. dimly lit/bright sunshine), and maintenance schedules that are both practical and feasible for the company. The aesthetics of the plants are also high on the list of concerns and selecting appropriate foliage plants, in co-ordinated colour schemes, and sourcing appropriate containers to fit in with the corporate branding is of equal importance. What of

the cost of implementing such a scheme? Interestingly enough it could save you money!

If a company with say 100 employees gains a reduction in absences of 1% this could roughly equate to a saving of £20,000 per annum. If a one off investment of say £10k was then combined with say £5k of annual expense (£3k maintenance, £2k write offs) this would result in a first year saving of £5k with ongoing annual savings of £10k. So what are you waiting for, what better time than the New Year to bring in an indoor greening policy, into your business, improve your staff's health and improve your bottom line at the same time?

To find out more please contact Aralia Garden Design on 01279 730 040

E - m a i l :
info@aralia.org.uk

Other useful sources of info: www.healthygreenat-work.org and www.flow-ers.org.uk

Book: How to grow fresh air: 50 houseplants that purify your home or office. B.C. Wolverton. Penguin Books, 1996



Plants can play a key role in reducing stress levels in the workplace.