

Interiorscapes



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Interiorscaping is the practice of designing and caring for living plants to enhance our indoor environment. Interiorscapers are the professionals you see walking building lobbies or office suites with their hands in the plants - cleaning, watering and pruning. But it doesn't stop there, they also design and arrange the plants within the work spaces of building lobbies and offices.

Flashback – Dallas, Texas 1970's

Ray Lily and Robert Abramson worked as exterior landscape consultants for North Haven Gardens and noticed that commercial office buildings were using interior plants to complement the interior design, however there were few, if any, maintenance people (other than janitorial or engineering staff) tending to the plants. Ray and Robert seized the opportunity and started one of the first sophisticated "Interiorscape" companies; they named it 'Green Expectations'.

Fast forward – Dallas, Texas 2008

As our society has become more sophisticated, so has our use of interior plants. Yes - it actually has been proven that interior plants clean the air and increase worker productivity - this and more.

Karrie McCampbell, senior vice president of management at Transwestern and president of Dallas BOMA, noted that greenery has become an important part of leasing and tenant retention. "It helps make a statement and leave a good first impression," she said to the *Dallas Business Journal*.

This Ain't Green Acres, Arnold!

Bringing the outside inside is always one of the goals of an interiorscaper. The challenge has always been lighting. What appears in your back yard as 'high-light' or 'low-light' is not necessarily the same inside.

In 1970, there were **0** entries in Webster's Dictionary under 'Interiorscape'. Today, there are over **1,000** entries on the Internet!

Outdoor plants are exposed to some portion of sunlight all day, regardless of shade or partial shade. Inside is a very different story. Interior light levels generally fit into one of three categories: next to a window, near a window, or fluorescent light only. Like outdoor landscaping, the possible choices of plants increase or decrease from one location to another; obviously, the further away from a window, the number of plant choices one has to work with is greatly reduced. Like in so many things that involve 'real estate', location is extremely important.

Plants are not the only way to bring the outside inside. Hardscape, such as rocks, pebbles and boulders are very popular. With luscious green sheet moss and fluffy chartreuse moss, this can create an organic look for almost any location. In atriums, creating faux river beds, rough terrain or areas of green moss to complement the design are just some of the elements which can be introduced. Not everyone has the luxury of an atrium, but hope is not lost; interiorscapers can use small colored pebbles or the simplicity of sheet moss in various colors to spruce up any plant and container.

The Process of Containment

In the day and age of "everyone wants something new and different", plants and containers are the easiest and lowest cost way to change the look of a building lobby, atrium

and/or office. Their placement should complement the architectural flow of



the room and to make an impact at the same time.

Proposed containers for a project can make or break a deal, and luckily for the interiorscapers the container industry has come a long way since the days of wicker baskets. For example, metal and stainless steel containers have been re-introduced with slight variances of earth tone colors. Geometric styles of tapered down cylinders, squares, and hexagonal shapes can make a huge impact and upright tall European cylindrical and square style containers 3-4 feet tall, along with sleek modern architectural containers with slight organic curves, are making great strides. Recently, containers made from renewable material (e.g., bamboo) are making a huge impact on the industry. Want to go "green?" try a renewable container made from bamboo!

Interiorscaping is not only defined by everything mentioned here, it's also



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“The decision to build a green building and the decision to specify tropical plants stem from the same criteria – to create the most healthy environment possible for employees.”

— Daniel Peruzzi, Margulies & Associates Architects, Boston
Architect for *Blue Cross Blue Shield*, *Interiorscape Magazine*



a way of life for some interiorscapers. From watering plants to pruning them, from watching them grow to designing and arranging them, it's all in a day's work for an interiorscaper, or as some people call us... "plant people." So next time you run into a "plant person" in your building lobby or office suite, don't hesitate to ask a question about caring for home or office plants. We love to talk plants with just about anyone who'll listen. ■