

Facilities Management from A to Z



Based on The FM Lexicon by Martin Pickard
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Horticulture

Most facility managers have some responsibility for Horticultural activities, whether they are responsible for a few potted plants around an office, a bit of landscaping or for a country estate. This is yet another area where the Facilities professional needs to draw on the resources of a technical specialist, in this case the Horticulturalist.

Interior planting can greatly add to the ambience of a workplace but unmaintained, brown or dying plants can also detract from the rest of the interior design. Investing in interior landscaping and its ongoing maintenance can be justified by a business case if the benefits claimed by the Horticultural industry apply.

The European Federation of Interior Landscaping Groups (eFIG) claim a wide range of benefits and have published a good deal of research linking plants with employee health and productivity: Absence due to sickness has been shown to reduce by as much as 60% (Smith/Lohr); Staff who can see plants from their desks are more likely to remain calm (Bringslimark); Staff that are less stressed are more productive (Lohr); Just one plant can reduce feelings of negativity, anxiety and depression (Burchett); and staff who have some say in the decoration of their workspace i.e. plants and pictures are 32% more productive (Knight)

The quality, design and condition of perimeter landscaping are just as important to the impression a facility can give to visitors and staff. The specification of appropriate planting is key, particularly with the growing importance of water conservation. Drought resistant foliage can save a fortune in water bills and avoid an undesirable deterioration of appearance.

Exterior planting can also be used as an effective feature of a layered security approach. An attractive shrub border can be created with plants that scratch and bite. Criminals do not like climbing through a barrier that can not only be painful but where a bit of ripped clothing or a few drops of blood can help the police to identify them. Plants like Rosa Rugosa, Pyracantha, Berberis and Mahonia are excellent choices here.

Where a facility includes more extensive grounds, woodlands or even livestock, a professional rural estate manager may be involved. The management of woodlands, fishing and shooting rights, wildlife conservation, tenant farmers and other issues can be very time consuming and require a focused approach.

The British Association of Landscape Industries (BALI) is the UK's representative trade association for the landscaping sector www.bali.org.uk

The European Federation of Interior Landscaping Groups (eFIG) research evidence can be found at www.efig.eu.com