

LESSON 1 INTRODUCTION

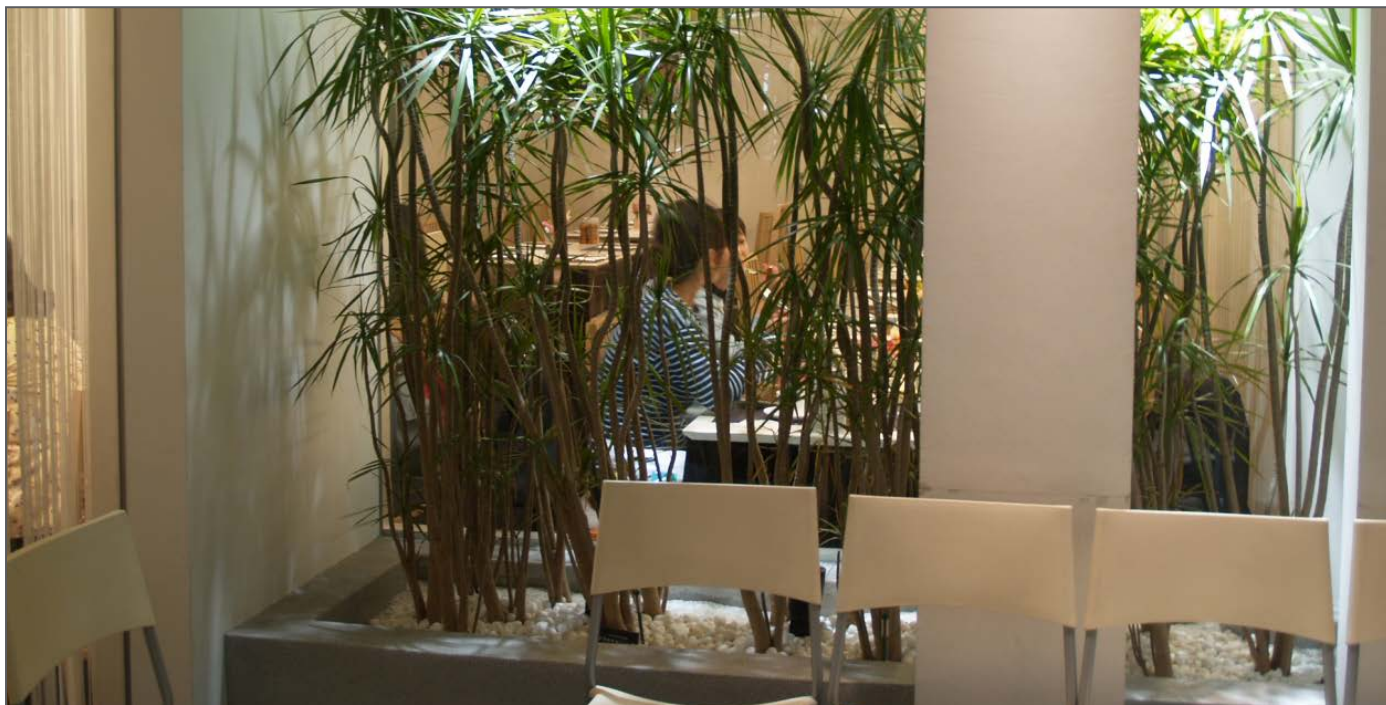
Psychological and Physical Benefits of Plants

Plants are grown indoors because of the psychological and physical benefits they bring. Indoor plants improve an indoor space aesthetically, making it a more pleasing environment; studies have shown that 'greening' an office space gives people a more positive and less stressed outlook. In fact, creating green spaces within a hospital was found to aid healing.

Plants also influence physical conditions including temperature, humidity, light, and air quality. We all know that plants turn carbon dioxide into oxygen, thereby improving air quality. Some plants also have the ability to filter the air by extracting pollutants or emissions such

as those exuded by furnishings, carpets, paint, some cleaning agents and even people. This means indoor plants are an advantage in stuffy offices where there are often no opening windows; indoor plants can help to recirculate stale or polluted air.

Plants can also be used in places in ways that affect the actions of people, changing how people move through a space, where they are likely to stop and linger, or where they are likely to look. In commercial locations, or in fact in public buildings, schools, hospitals etc., people may be attracted to sit on the edges of planters near entrances or within interior courtyards; good design should accommodate this by providing seating beside the plants in such locations. Creating indoor green spaces through the use of interior plants is as much about good design as it is about the plants.



Architectural use of plants provides a privacy screen to this restaurant

Suggested Tasks: ▼

Throughout this course you will be provided with suggested tasks and reading to aid with your understanding. These will appear in the right hand column. Remember: these tasks are optional. The more you complete, the more you will learn, but in order to complete the course in 20 hours you will need to manage your time well. We suggest you spend about 10 minutes on each task you attempt, and no more than 20 minutes.

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Suggested Tasks

Visit a commercial building that has indoor plants (eg. a shopping centre, office building, or any other place open to the public). Notice what plants are looking healthiest, and the conditions around those plants (eg. light or dark, exposed or protected from drafts, in warm or cold places).

Purposes Served by Plants Indoors

(Ref. adapted from 'Interior Landscaping' by Tok Furuta pub. Reston 1983)

USE	FUNCTION
Emotional or Symbolic	Maintaining a connection between people and the natural world Create a psychological feeling of being in a better place
Sensual	Mood delineators Senses stimulated by plant fragrances, touch, sounds, etc.
Architectural	Screening for privacy Hiding undesirable views (eg. rubbish bins) Providing an unfolding view Articulating space/ dividing up spaces/ defining spaces vertically and/or horizontally
Engineering	Controlling traffic – movement of people or anything else -including security (large planters stop cars crashing through pedestrian areas. Reducing glare Sound control (e.g. reducing echo)
Environmental Conditions	Modifying temperature – reduces temperature fluctuations Modifying oxygen/carbon dioxide balance in air Filtering air – dust, toxins
Aesthetic	Providing a backdrop – softening a wall, harsh lines, etc Altering or affecting lines Framing views Providing a feature – as a living sculpture, through colour or texture effects, etc.



Bonsai may create a temporary indoor feature; but most bonsai are not suited or intended to be kept indoors for very long

WHERE INDOOR PLANTS ARE USED

Different situations may warrant different quantities of – and qualities in -- indoor plants.

Indoor plants may be used in:

- Homes
- High-rise apartments
- Offices
- Shopping centres
- Restaurants
- Hotels
- Factories
- Other public places, such as schools, hospitals, rehabilitation centres and so on.

Different individuals will have varying levels of commitment to plants and perhaps varying needs to have plants near to them. Many people find great satisfaction in caring for plants, while some consider plant care a chore to be avoided. Others are somewhere between these extremes. Most people, however, admire plants irrelevant of the amount of input they do or do not want to put into their care. In large public spaces or buildings, indoor plants are usually cared for by a contracted team of interior gardeners. These green spaces are usually designed by knowledgeable designers and are often the most successful. In the small office, the responsibility usually falls to the person with the most interest in plants – if that person leaves, then plants are often neglected. In the home, the plant carer is usually the home owner. It takes commitment to look after plants and have them thriving – not everyone will succeed even with the best intentions. This text will help those with an interest in indoor plant growing and design, and horticulturists branching out into this field.



This *Monstera* may be too large for a desk. It will grow even bigger

space are met. Not everyone wants a plant hanging over their head above their office desk, and light should never be compromised. Plants need to be placed so that they do not become a nuisance to users of a given space.

Why?

Why do you want to use indoor plants? Some reasons include aesthetics, to improve air quality, or to improve the well-being of the people using a space. It can also be all of these.

Where?

Where to place indoor plants is a mix of functionality combined with aesthetics – both the people using the space and the plants need to be able to function effectively.

Available space: the space will dictate where and how to place plants. Plants may be kept in suitable containers on the floor (space permitting), hanging from the ceiling (harder to maintain), near windows (without blocking light), or on desks (if the person using that desk is open to that).

Placement: it is important to avoid blocking access, i.e. the areas people use to negotiate their way through a space, corridors, entrances and exits, blocking light from windows etc. All these aspects need to be taken into consideration when placing plants.

What?

Choosing the right plant is as important as choosing where it should be placed. Plants, like people, need certain environmental conditions to thrive.

Considerations When Introducing Indoor Plants

The Why, Where, What and How of Indoor Plants

There are several considerations when you introduce indoor plants into a building, whether it is a home, office, public building or other space. Introducing plants is not usually one dimensional; indeed, it requires careful thought. Where should you position them? The 'best' position may not always be the most practical. What should you choose? And how can you introduce them? You also need to ensure that when introducing plants or suggesting a design, that the needs of the people working or living within that