

GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

9/1/2021

Are Buildings Getting Their Fair Share of the Plant Craze?

Chris Beytes

As gardening benefits from the pandemic and as foliage plants boom like it's 1975 (thank you, Instagram!), are the world's commercial real estate investors participating in the trends?

They ARE saying they want to invest in "healthy" buildings, says Mary Golden, Advocacy Incubator & Executive Administrator for Green Plants for Green Buildings (GPGB). She had a piece on the topic in the most recent National Horticulture Foundation newsletter.

However, according to a survey conducted by GPGB earlier this year, the two top barriers building professionals encounter when incorporating nature into their buildings are maintenance costs, followed by installation costs. How do we get them past that? Show them the research that's been conducted over the past 50 years on the benefits of plants on people. Such as:

In the workplace: Reduced absences by 10%; increased productivity by 12%; higher levels of wellbeing (15%) and creativity (15%); and improvements in concentration (19%). Using Department of Labor statistics, this yields a 3:1 return on the investment in plants.

Access to nature in healthcare facilities: Shorten post-surgical hospital stays by 8.5% (about one day), shorten depression-related hospital stays by 2.6 days; reduced the need for post-surgery medication by 20% to 22%. Incorporating nature into facilities can reduce the cost of both patient care and staffing while improving medical outcomes.

Access to nature in the classroom: 20% to 26% faster progress through curricula; improved attendance by 3.5 days per year; improved test scores by 5% to 14%. Not only does this data indicate institutional savings, with an increase of 20% in progress through curriculum, it also opens the possibility of adding enrichment programs to the student's experience.

Access to nature in retail: Consumers are willing to pay up to 25% more for goods; and are prepared to travel farther, pay more for parking and will stay longer in locations with greenery. This is of growing economic significance for brick-and-mortar stores competing for customers with online stores.

If you have the opportunity to influence real estate decision-makers, share this data with them and get more of our product in and around the world's buildings!

To learn even more about making the case for nature in building environments, go to

greenplantsforgreenbuildings.org/biophilia-training and download for free “The Economics of Biophilic Design.” **GT**