

# Biophilia – You already have it!

## But don't panic...that's a good thing.

Experiments conducted by environmental psychologist Roger Ulrich showed that just by having a view from a window onto a natural scene conveyed a range of measurable health benefits to recovering patients! This made their stay in hospital actually cost less and made the accountant very happy! Of course, here at the Interior Plantscape Association we have a bias interest in this subject, but here are some facts you may not know.

Biophilia is the instinctive preference we have for certain natural characteristics within our environment. Nature in or around the workplace is important for employees too, whether in the public or private sector. Government departments are often denied any perceived 'perks' such as plants or office design even though they are expected to produce results the same as any other business. These departments need to remain competitive in recruiting and retaining good staff, and having a Healthy and Productive workplace contributes to this.

As you will see, Ulrich's study began a wave of research into the area known as biophilia. The University of Technology Sydney (UTS) is one of those who have conducted independent studies to find the following facts:

- Reduce indoor air pollution
- Reduce workplace illness
- Reduce sick leave absences
- Reduce stress and negativity
- Do not create unhealthy mould problems
- Raise performance and productivity
- Improve job satisfaction
- Enhance business image with potential clients
- Improve school performance and patient wellbeing
- Contribute to meeting at least 75% of Indoor Environmental Quality (IEQ)

criteria

In fact, disturbing evidence is now emerging that many designs are at best subtly degrading the quality of life of their users, and at worst actually making them ill. Can this be true? What is going on?

Just by thinking about where you would rather work, you may have answered this question!!!



There are other surprising benefits. For example, researcher Koen Steemers and colleagues at Cambridge University found that the presence of vegetation can increase thermal comfort. In principle, that means simply by adding plants, it's possible to raise or lower the thermostat and still maintain perceived comfort, while significantly reducing energy loads.

Current research at UTS aims to establish optimum conditions for indoor plants to be used in routine installations to reduce building energy costs for sustainable urban living. Find out more here about Biophilia and other indoor plant information: <http://interiorplantscape.asn.au/uts-research-papers>

