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Green Star Guide for Interior Plantscapers

Green Star – Interiors rates the sustainable design and construction of any building fitout works. The Interiors rating tool aims to assist clients and project teams to objectively rate their projects, and achieve sustainability goals. The tool encourages a new approach to designing and constructing fitouts by rewarding sustainability best practice and excellence. It also provides consistent and clear advice in an easy to use manner.

Green Building Council of Australia (GBCA) new.gbca.org.au/green-star recognises the ability of indoor plants to improve indoor air quality through its Green Star – Interiors v1.3 rating tool.

This tool rates the sustainable design and construction of building fitout works both in the 'Design' and 'As Built' phases.

Categories within the Green Star, Interiors v1.3 rating tool include:

Management, energy, transport, water, materials, land use and ecology, emissions, innovation and indoor environmental quality (IEQ).

From 100 core points, 23 points are available for IEQ.

'Indoor Pollutants' category sits under IEQ to recognise projects that safeguard occupant health through the reduction in internal air pollutant levels.

Credit criteria for this category include Paints, Adhesives and Sealants, Carpets, Engineered Wood Products and Indoor Plants.

The use of Indoor Plants can help companies to gain two points towards their overall Green Star – Interiors rating score.

To gain these two points, a business must provide at least 500cm² of total soil surface area for a nominated area of 10m². The aggregated soil surface area is 0.5% of the nominated area in each 'distinct area' within the scope of the fit out. The proponent must also ensure that an ongoing maintenance plan is established for all plants with a reputable plant maintenance contractor.

Read more to find out the **most frequently asked questions** that will help you and your clients achieve a Green Star rating for their interior fitout.



Can I use plants in pots with surface soil areas less than 500cm² for the Indoor Plants criterion? gbca.org.au/faqs

Yes. The intent of the credit is to achieve 500cm² total. This can be achieved using many smaller plants or etc. The benefit from having indoor plants is not diminished by having plants with smaller surface soil areas. To achieve these points the project team needs to comply with the requirement for at least 500cm² of total soil surface area per 10m² of the nominated area. The number of pots or plants does not count towards this credit. For example, for a nominated area of 100m², at least 0.5m² of total soil surface area must be provided.



Can I use vertical landscaping for the Indoor Pollutants - Indoor Plants credit? gbca.org.au/faqs

Yes, but a technical question to demonstrate your approach should be submitted to the GBCA for review and approval.



Can indoor plants be excluded in tertiary spaces and other functional areas? gbca.org.au/faqs

Yes. For the purposes of “Indoor Plants” credit criteria (12.3) tertiary areas and certain other functional spaces may be excluded.

Functional spaces can be considered as primary and secondary spaces in the nominated area that are not accessible to the plant maintenance contractor. These are areas where security access is unavailable, and the enclosed space is greater than 25m².

In the instance where there are areas excluded, the overall total requirement of planting will not be reduced. Planting provisions to be presented in tabular form in the submission to demonstrate how the functional areas have been included in the total planting soil area requirements for the tenancy. Project teams should submit marked-up as-built drawings showing the nominated area used for "Indoor Plants" credit criteria (12.3). Any other spaces excluded due to functional reasons should be indicated on these drawings and a reason needs to be included in the submission as to why they have been excluded.



Does there need to be 500cm² of soil surface area per every 10m² section of nominated area? new.gbca.org.au/green-star

No. Whilst the intention of the 'Indoor Plants' credit is to have plants evenly distributed throughout the floorplate of a building, it is not a requirement that there be 500m² of soil surface area in every 10m² of nominated area.

Compliance with Credit 12.3.1 can be demonstrated by showing that the aggregated soil surface area is 0.5% of the nominated area in each 'distinct area' within the scope of the fitout.

When demonstrating compliance in this way, it is up to the project team to identify these 'distinct areas' within the fitout and show that a considered approach to evenly distributing indoor plants has been taken.

Interested in more information?

For interior ratings tool and advice contact Green Building Council of Australia

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To access resources related to the Green Star – Interiors rating tool, you can create a free log –in without committing to the program. new.gbca.org.au