



Welcome

Welcome to the latest edition of the Rentokil Initial Tropical Plants Worldwide Newsletter, which is now for our customers as well as our own staff.

This edition highlights successful design in both the United States and South Africa as well as information on controlling plant pests without the need for chemical pesticides. There is also a review of some useful and interesting web sites as well as our contact details. Remember, your contributions to this newsletter are always welcome and help to make it relevant and interesting to as many people as possible.

Award winners

Initial Tropical Plants USA has just won several awards at the recent Calscape expo in Palm Springs, California. Two of the awards were for Christmas installations, including an Award of Excellence for this impressive creation on Rodeo Drive in the Beverly Hills district of Los Angeles. The colour scheme was based on the signature shade of blue used by the Tiffany jewellery company, and several hundred decorations were hand painted in that exact hue.

Another Award of Excellence was given for the seasonal decorations at Tishman Speyer in the Mellon Bank Center, Los Angeles. Here the client was anxious that the display was different from the traditional shades of red and green, but didn't want anything too radical. A cream and gold scheme was selected and installed in late November, just after the American Thanksgiving holiday.

An Award of Merit was given for the refurbishment of the plant displays at Fletcher Jones Motor Cars of Newport Beach, California. This Mercedes-Benz dealership makes good use of its interior and exterior landscaping to promote their own brand image as well as that of their luxury cars. The transformation of the atrium, including the removal of a 10m tall King Palm and its replacement with 2 large Kentias was achieved over one night ready for the showroom's opening at 8 am the next day.

We congratulate everyone involved in achieving these awards. For more information, contact Todd Ferguson, our branch manager in Los Angeles (tferguson@initialplants.com).





Tengo

Rentokil Tropical Plants in South Africa have unveiled their new and exclusive range of containers. "Tengo", which means "sculpture" in the Venda language, was launched at a series of special events for interior designers, architects and key customers in South Africa during August.

Tengo was designed by a leading South African industrial designer, Brian Steinhobel. The fantastically contemporary shapes of these containers complement the interior decor of a wide variety of modern buildings, from corporate offices to bars, restaurants and showrooms. However, the design was actually inspired by natural, organic forms and it is easy to imagine palm tree trunks, seed pods or even huge caterpillars and this makes Tengo look at home in more traditional settings as well.

Tengo is available in a wide variety of colours, including some very bright shades, and they can also be fitted with internal lights in the base, which allows them to glow. Made from recyclable plastic, Tengo is strong, lightweight and completely waterproof, and is suitable for use with subterranean irrigation and hydroculture systems.



Further information about the Tengo container range, including opportunities for exporting Tengo to other Rentokil Initial Tropical Plants countries, is available from Ivana Sain, Rentokil Tropical Plants South Africa's technical and training manager. (e-mail: ivana@rentokil.co.za).



Pesticide-free plant care

It is a sad fact of life that interior plants, like all plants, are subject to the attentions of an array of pests. Insects, mites and other creepy-crawlies chew leaves, eat roots, inject poisons, suck sap, spread disease and do their best to make our beautiful plants into ugly wrecks. Traditionally, the response of the proud horticulturist was to wreak vengeance with an armoury of chemical pesticides. Luckily, there are now effective alternative techniques that are cleaner, safer and kinder to the environment.



Top tips for beating bugs

- Keep your plants clean. The physical action of cleaning plants is very effective at removing vast numbers of some pests. However, be aware that you might transfer pests from one plant to another if you don't keep your dusters and cloths clean.
- Consider using biological control. Some are better than others, so get good advice. Biological control of spider mites can be especially effective.
- Use subterranean irrigation to defeat fungus gnats (Sciarid flies). These insects can only breed in moist conditions and only in the top layer of soil, so keep the surface dry by using an approved irrigation system.
- Consider replacement. For small plants, it is usually more cost-effective to replace an infested plant than to spend time and effort in controlling the pests. You will also reduce the risk of the infestation spreading to other plants.
- Pruning and trimming plants is very beneficial. You will improve the shape of the plant, stimulate new growth and remove colonies of pests that are already on the plant.
- Make sure that your plants are suited to their environment. Take care to ensure that light and temperature are measured before the plants are specified and installed.
- Always obtain your plants from reputable suppliers and ensure that they are clean and pest free when you install them.

If you have mealybugs on your Marantas or spider mites on your spider plants, you may be tempted to reach for a can of insecticide. In many countries that act may be illegal, or at least heavily discouraged, so what can you do that is safe, legal and effective? The answer lies in adopting an integrated approach to pest management, known as IPM. This means understanding the life cycles of the pest species and the interactions of our plants with their environment. It also means using a wide variety of techniques together to defeat the pests.

Many plants succumb to a pest infestation because they are already weakened by another influence. For example, low light might limit the growth of a plant, so leaves might be lost to a pest more quickly than they can be replaced by the plant. You can either increase the light levels (which is not always practical) or you can change the plant for something better suited to lower light.

Many insect species have rapid life cycles with eggs, larvae and adults all being present at the same time. If you can find a way of breaking the life cycle, then the pest population will eventually die out. Biological control methods

often rely on the use of a natural enemy of the pest that feeds on a specific part of the life cycle. Whitefly, for instance, is controlled by a parasite that feeds on the final juvenile stage of the insect, so it never reaches sexual maturity. However, for this approach to work, you must ensure that you keep a population of parasites available as younger whitefly grow to the stage when they can be attacked.

Finally, remember that the single most effective method of keeping pests under control on interior plants is to keep them clean and green.



Interesting web sites

www.bomi-edu.org

BOMI International is the educational institute associated with the Building Owners and Managers Association, an American based organization for facilities managers and related professionals. Initial Tropical Plants USA is an approved provider of Continuing Professional Development for BOMI International qualified members, which it delivers through our "Plants in Buildings" seminar programme and web site.



www.FXdesign.co.uk

This new web site complements the content of one of the leading publications for commercial interior designers and architects. As well as news on some of the latest interior design projects from around the world, there are useful links to other organizations and product suppliers.

www.csi.eu.com

Clarke and Spears International supply plants and containers to many of our European businesses. As well as their own range of very good fibreglass products (or Advanced Composite, as they would prefer you to call it), Clarke and Spears also stocks most the latest products from leading Dutch and other European manufacturers.



Contributions Please!

Contributions are welcome from our readers around the world. If you don't have time to write at length, send us brief notes or telephone us and we'll prepare an article for you.

Remember, if you want a swift reply to a tricky technical question, send an e-mail to the editor and we will do our best to answer it.

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