



**URBAN planters**<sup>®</sup>  
for greener interiors

NEWSLETTER

**URBAN update**

ISSUE 25

**WELCOME** We've had a busy few months here at Urban Planters: we have been installing living walls, living pillars, bringing themed parties to life and planting gigantic trees, to name but a few of our new schemes. We have also been showered in national landscape awards and are awaiting our launches of the latest 'Plants Extra Large' book and our new designer app UrbanDesign. What's next?!

## COLOUR IS KEY FOR NEW LIVING WALL

When an existing client, AJW Aviation, asked Urban Planters Sussex to create a large living wall for its new campus in West Sussex, they asked for as much colour as possible. This was no easy task, given the types of specimens available for use on a wall structure.

However, with careful planning by Urban Planters, along with the client and leading UK living wall supplier Biotecture, a range of plants were selected to create a pattern of sweeping lines in a variety of colours, including reds, oranges, white and, of course, various shades of green.

The wall was constructed by Biotecture in their greenhouse in Chichester, allowing the plants to mature for eight weeks before being transferred to the client's site.

The resulting 6.5 by 4.0 metre wall stands in the centre well of the new building, providing a bright focal point for AJW's employees across two floors.

As well as its striking visual impact, the wall also has a state-of-the-art irrigation system which is computer controlled and can be monitored and adjusted remotely over the internet.



## LONDON WEST GETS "PLUGGED IN" TO LOW-CARBON TRANSPORT



Urban Planters London West is one of only 20 businesses in England selected by the Energy Saving Trust to take part in a consultation on the use of electric vehicles.

The Plugged-in Fleets initiative, run in partnership with EDF Energy, provides free guidance from industry experts on how electric vehicles can add value to their organisation, and a strategic plan for the introduction of the vehicles into their fleet.

Richard Poole, Director of Urban Planters London West said, "We always aim to be at the forefront of environmental innovation, so we are excited to be involved in this forward-thinking programme. With the support of the Energy Saving Trust and EDF, we aim to introduce electric vehicles to our already green LPG fleet during 2012, thus reducing our impact on the environment still further, as well as our vehicle costs."

## NEW APP PUTS PLANTS IN THE PICTURE

As part of our drive to keep our industry at the forefront of technology, Urban Planters has launched a second app, this time to help clients visualise how the right plants can transform their premises.

Using mobile technology, UrbanDesign allows our designers to demonstrate how any of our pot and plant combinations will actually look as a plant display within any given area, using a photo of the location.

Our full range of plants and containers can be superimposed on the location image, adjusted to the right size and moved to the right location in the image, to create a virtual planting scheme which will give the client a clear picture of the scheme in situ.



We are very excited about being the first to create an app of this kind within our industry and even more excited that it will enable our customers to engage more with our designers to create truly inspirational plant displays.



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# PLANTS THAT ARE GOOD ENOUGH TO EAT

Our planting schemes always look good, but sometimes we can even make them taste good too!

Urban Planters Derbyshire was recently asked by Finesse Hotels to create a scheme for a confectionery company's party in the theme of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory.

The party was thrown to celebrate Hancock's 50th anniversary, and Urban's Paul Rogers went to town to create the right look for the festivities.

The result was a scene straight off a film set: trees with chocolates hanging from the branches, plants in edible (chocolate) soil, replica grass mounds covered in bright flowers, wonky fencing and bright green and red planters holding replica spiral topiary trees.

The scheme certainly provided Hancock's employees with plenty to talk about – and eat – during the party.



# WESTFIELD PLANT DISPLAYS TOWER ABOVE THE REST

Our latest installation at Westfield Shopping Centre in Derby is taking living walls into a new form. A row of columns situated outside the centre are now covered in dense foliage, using various grasses, mixed ferns, both variegated and green ivy, Pachysandra and purple Heuchera to create a mixture of shades of greens and reds.

Urban Planters Derbyshire's Alex Bushnell explains: "The towers needed softening and we thought this would be an effective take on the increasingly popular living walls. We're really pleased with the result: it's a great focal point along London Road for shoppers walking by."



# TEAM UP SCOOP 7 GOLDS!

Urban Planters has had another gold-plated year at the eFIG awards, with the national team, London West, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire winning seven golds, a silver and a bronze between them.

## Here are the winning schemes:

### Urban Planters Derbyshire

#### Alton Towers – Design and Installation (Between £5,000 - £10,000) GOLD

On the strength of their work on Alton Towers' Secret Garden, Urban Planters Derbyshire were asked to design and install new schemes for the Alton Towers and Splash Landings hotels, the conference suite and the spa.

The Alton Towers Hotel has a Victorian/explorer theme and plants and containers were chosen to mirror the feel of the décor. Specimens such as Kentia palms and Aspidistras were used, along with brass-finished planters on pedestals.

The conference suite had a similar look and planters were selected to match the colour and texture of the flying machine, suspended from the ceiling in the foyer. Containers on castors were used in some parts, to allow the plants to be moved to suit the event.

The Splash Landings hotel has a Caribbean-themed décor, so a range of tropical plants, including some large displays combining feature centre planting with brightly coloured underplanting were used.

In the spa a more subtle and peaceful feel was required, as well as specimens which would withstand the harsh conditions of a spa, so here hardy plants were planted in Polystone containers.



#### Eversheds – Design and Installation (Between £10,000 – £20,000) GOLD

International law firm Eversheds' London offices occupy an exclusive building and has an art and design theme running throughout.

Urban Planters were tasked with replacing some old and tired planting from a previous supplier in the glass cabinets in the restaurant. The client wanted something completely different, so it was decided that live planting would be too restrictive and instead Urban Planters thought out of the box on what could be achieved.

Urban Planters decided to create and fill some of the cabinets with large picture frames then fill the frames with preserved plants and flowers, to give the impression of framed art.

In a few of the other cabinets, hanging sculptures with fine bone white china lilies were created, using three different styles of lily. To add to the effect, Urban Planters installed preserved and replica planting underneath the hanging lilies to add to the tension and balance of piece. The client was amazed and seriously impressed with the final outcome.



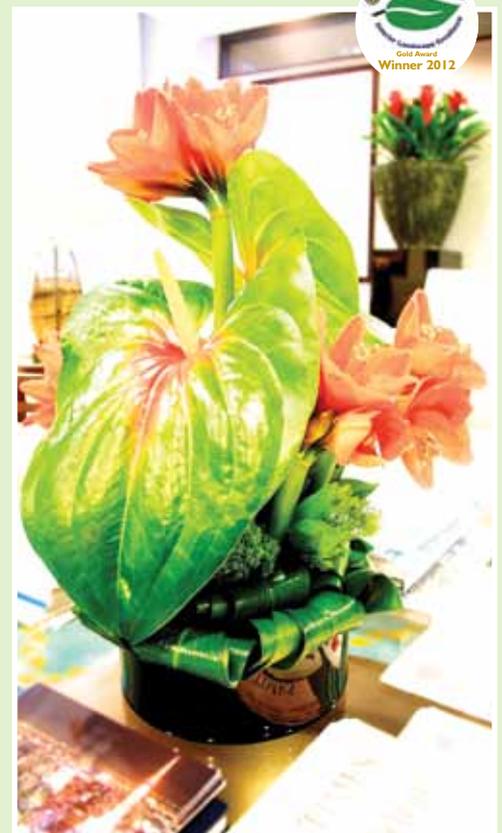
#### ExxonMobil – Design and Installation (Between £5,000 - £10,000) GOLD

This scheme, designed for ExxonMobil when they moved to a more central location in London, forms part of a national contract with the firm, and further solidifies a strong working relationship.

The new office has a very modern, high-spec feel despite being in an old building, so the planting scheme needed to reflect this. The resulting scheme uses complementing container styles and colours but in a variety of textures and materials and containing a range of different specimens.

The end result does justice to the prestigious feel of the offices: white cubed planters in ascending sizes contain three different Sansevieria, while the small but interesting shapes of Ficus bonsai trees sit in black and white shell planters along the windows in one seating area.

Elsewhere, there are hammered metal planters with Zamiculcas zamiifolia and more Ficus bonsai sit in emerald green fibreglass planters on pedestals.



# TEAM UP SCOOP 7 GOLDS!

## London West

### Sheraton Skyline Sky Garden

#### Maintenance

(Between £10,000 - 20,000 p/a) **GOLD**

This vast and striking scheme had already won a silver eFIG award in recognition of the extensive work Urban Planters London West carried out to revive this hotel interior patio garden after much of the planting failed when exposed to the elements as the atrium roof was changed.



Now, thanks to careful and regular maintenance, the tropical garden is now thriving, with several of the original large Ficus trees, Strelitzia and Rhapsis palms saved. These trees now brush up against a range of new specimens bringing variety and colour to create a tropical island feel. The plants are doing so well that the banana trees have produced fruits suitable for use in the hotel kitchen!

Some of the maintenance challenges here include pest control, draining poolside beds of excessive water from swimming pool splash and carefully pruning any branches overhanging the pool. Tree surgeons come in to maintain the larger trees every 18 months.

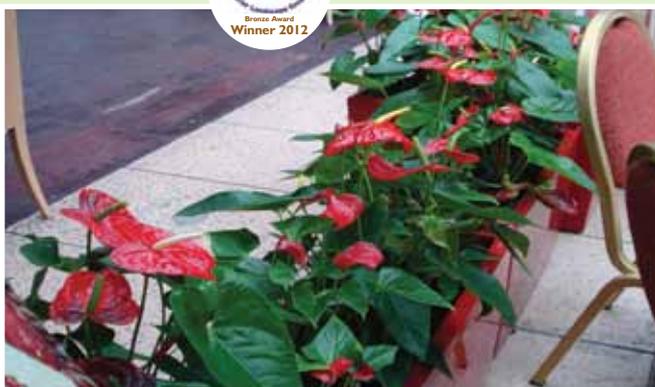
### Sheraton Garden Restaurant – Design and Installation (Up to £5,000) **BRONZE**

Following the success of the planting scheme for Sheraton's Sky Garden (see above), Urban Planters London West were asked to design a scheme for the hotel's new restaurant within the garden.

When designing the scheme, it was important to choose plants and containers which reflected the restaurant's contemporary décor, provided a screen from the rest of the garden whilst at the same time continued the tropical theme of the Sky Garden.

We selected bold-coloured planters in lime green, orange and red, to match the décor but also attract passers by. Bright red Anthuriums at the entrance to the eating area also served to draw in potential diners, while bushy *Trachycarpus fortuneii*, linked with the plants in the adjacent garden and, although acting as a barrier, they still allowed the diners to enjoy the views over the garden.

Finally, two troughs planted with 1.6m Kentia palms were used to screen the eating area from the proposed food preparation area.



### Freshfields – Design and Installation (Up to £5,000) **GOLD**

Urban Planters London West were tasked with creating a unique planting scheme to soften and bring a sense of calm to the stylish entrance of this international law firm. The displays would be part of the total redesign involving furniture and floor coverings.

The colours and lines of the Polyshell monochrome containers complement the background colours of the reception area and are no longer available, thereby achieving the unique status requested by the client.



The plants make the whole area softer and reduce the echo, with the structural shape of the *Dracaena compacta* forming a perfect, planted avenue of foliage from door to desk.

The beautiful red Anthurium complements the cushions on the sofas and bring colour to the area with black chairs and making it an attractive area to sit and wait for an appointment or just to relax.



# TEAM UP SCOOP 7 GOLDS!

## Urban Planters Derbyshire

### Ikanos Financial Consulting

#### Design and Installation

(Up to £5,000) **GOLD**

When Ikanos Consulting moved into its first offices, they approached Urban Planters Nottinghamshire to design a planting scheme, following a recommendation from another client.

The new offices were decorated with bright white walls and lime green and purple furniture, and, after Urban Planters were trusted to design a scheme with minimal input from the client, the decision was made to use bold green and purple planters to match the décor, as opposed to something more subtle and traditionally corporate.

One requirement of the scheme was to provide a natural screen between a breakout area and the work stations, so two troughs – one in bright green and the other in white - were placed on top and alongside a white cabinet and were planted with the upright Sansevieria 'Laurentii'.

On the main floor, Ficus bonsai, branched Dracaena deremensis 'Lemon & Lime' and branched Beaucarnea stand out in tall purple planters, while on the balcony, low white containers keep the plants sheltered from the wind while providing interest for employees stepping outside.



## Ikano Financial Services

### Design and Installation (Up to £5,000) **SILVER**

Ikano also approached Urban Planters Nottinghamshire on a recommendation when it moved into new, modern offices in the city.

The décor and colour scheme was bright and eclectic and the client knew exactly what they wanted from the planting: something different to the traditional corporate style.

So, Urban Planters went to work selecting planters in orange red and silver, positioning them so that they were focal points in the lobby area, and throughout the open plan offices.

As the offices had a lot of natural light, there was a wide range of plants to choose from, so specimens were selected to give a variety of sizes, shapes and leaf type, again tying in with the diverse décor in the office.



## Porterbrook – Design and Installation

### (Up to £5,000) **GOLD**

Urban Planters Nottinghamshire were approached a year before Porterbrook moved into their newly-built offices and were asked to design a planting scheme ready for its completion.

Having the luxury of time meant that Urban Planters could look through swatches and samples for the office décor and decided that the planting could be quite bold and therefore a real focal point in the office.

Against the blue carpet of the office area, two-metre-high plants in lime green ceramic planters in rows of four make a statement, while brushed metallic bowls containing Ficus microcarpa specimens are a more subtle look for the meeting rooms.



# RESIN TREE **LIGHTS UP SPA** RELAXATION AREA



**Urban Planters Edinburgh** was recently asked to refresh the planting at long-standing client **Stobo Castle Health Spa**.

In the spa's relaxation area, Urban Planters had previously provided planting around a central fountain (see right hand image), but when the owner wanted to remove the fountain, he asked Urban's Carol Riddell to come up with something a bit different which would require minimal maintenance, to ensure the spa's visitors were not disturbed.

The answer came in the form of a three-stemmed, five-metre tall and five-metre wide canopy resin trunk tree with replica olive foliage, which creates a very lifelike alternative to the real thing. Draped in fairy lights and lanterns, the tree provides a focal point for the spa's clients as they unwind.

## BRINGING PLANTS BACK TO LIFE AT **THECENTRE: MK**

**It's been two years of hard work but the results are staggering: Urban Planters Milton Keynes** took on the maintenance of a planting scheme in serious need of some TLC in August 2010 and has managed over time to bring many of the specimens back from the brink to full vitality.

TheCentre: MK opened 27 years ago, and some of its more unusual plants have been there since then, including a 10m Banyan tree (*Ficus benghalensis*), a 10m Date palm (*Phoenix dactylifera*), eleven 12m *Washingtonia filifera*, and an 8m Baobab tree (*Adansonia digitata*), possibly the largest one to be found indoors anywhere in the world.

Although the original planting has put down strong roots (there are no foundations under the plant beds, so the roots go straight into the sub-soil underneath the building), when Urban Planters took on the work, many specimens were on their last legs.

To counter this, Urban set up a twice-yearly, intensive out-of-hours maintenance programme for working at height, together with ongoing regular low-level maintenance during shop opening hours. The first pruning session filled three 40-yard skips, but, with a lot of care, the plants are now thriving.



# RACE AGAINST THE CLOCK FUELS SERVICE STATION INSTALL

Urban Planters London South West has completed an installation at a brand new motorway services on the M25 just one hour before it opened, after construction works ran behind.

Cobham Services opened at 4am to the public with little sign of the flurry of activity to complete the work there, with the 9 large beds of planting in place among the new cafés and shops before the doors opened.

The client, Extra Motorway Services, had requested that the architects, Devereux, and principal contractor, BAM Construction Ltd (South East), use Urban Planters for the indoor planting after being impressed with previous work we had done for them at another of their service stations at Beaconsfield MSA.

The scheme at Cobham Services used 2x 6.5 metre and 2x 2.8 metre replica Ficus binnendijkii 'Alii' trees to fit into purpose-built furniture planters. Nephrolepis exaltata ferns were used as underplanting for the trees and on their own as dense planting in the remaining beds.

Franchise Director Alan Page, who worked on the installation, said: "The planters were part of the furnishings at the station and were being built on the last day, so we were literally planting the beds as each container was completed!"



Base



Upper Sections



Erection

"We worked halfway through the night, but the end result was fantastic and fits in perfectly with the smart new services. Extra Motorway Services and BAM Construction have already given us some very positive feedback on the scheme, which makes everything worthwhile."

# AIRPORT HOTEL CELEBRATES ITS WOODLAND LOCALITY

When Radisson Blu opened its new hotel at East Midlands airport it wanted a planting scheme with a nod to its position, as the gateway to the National Forest.

The hotel's décor included features such as birds suspended from the ceiling, and images of trees covering entire walls, and Radisson wanted Urban Planters Derbyshire to provide planting to reflect the woodland theme throughout the communal areas of the hotel.

After careful consideration of the various environmental conditions in the atrium, 16 Ficus binnendijkii 'Alii' were selected. All the specimens stand in tall, square rattan-effect planters to create a natural feel.

In the restaurant, Urban Planters created a hedge effect around the restaurant area with densely planted, box-shaped Philodendrons in seven troughs. Outside, wooden planters housing Photinia fraseri 'Red Robin' trees and under-planted with topiary, soften the modern entrance.



# THREE FRANCHISES CELEBRATE 10 YEARS OF GROWING SUCCESS

**This year sees our North Kent, Oxford and West Country Franchisees celebrating 10 years since they joined Urban Planters.**

Back in 2002, Dave Hill, Rory Waterer and David Wells each signed up for an Urban Planters franchise and have seen their businesses grow from strength to strength, despite recent difficult economic times.

*"I always knew from a very long time ago that I wanted to run my own business someday, and in 2002 the perfect opportunity arose to join Urban Planters,"* explains Rory Waterer, owner of the Oxford, Marlow and Milton Keynes franchises. *"I was already friendly with the Murrison (the original owners) and I was convinced that I could deliver better service levels to clients with the backing of a strong brand like Urban Planters."*

*"I wanted to build a big business right from the start and much of the decision-making along the way has been geared to that initial vision. The ability to offer exterior maintenance services alongside interior has allowed us to continue to grow and build loyalty from clients right through a very deep recession."*

David Wells, who bought the Gloucester franchise (now Urban Planters Westcountry), says of his ten years: *"Starting your own business from scratch is always a daunting task, and after creating a short list from many franchises on offer, I decided to go with an Urban Planters franchise. After 10 years of very good growth I know I made the right choice."*

*"Although building any business is down to hard work, you also need the experience, correct back-up and support of the franchisor to guide you along the way. I found just this when selecting Urban Planters: they offered very good training, marketing and massive industry knowledge, which you should get from any large national company."*

Urban Planters North Kent's Dave Hill says: *"Looking back over the last 10 years it's clear that the Urban Planters franchise brand has kept pace with changes in the industry as well as methods of communicating with and supporting the network. We have seen big improvements in terms of the quality of marketing material, the website, Head Office support, internal systems and the strength of the national network as a whole."*

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## NATIONAL NEWS:

### A 'LIVING PICTURE' FOR HOTEL LA TOUR

Hotel La Tour has signed up Urban Planters to create a 4.5 by 2.6 metre living wall for its new four-star hotel in the heart of Birmingham.

The wall contains 250 Philodendron scandens, a vine with a heart-shaped leaf, and is surrounded by a white aluminium frame, to create a living picture in the hotel's foyer.



## HARNESSING THE POWER OF NATURE



Sustainability is always high on Urban Planters' agenda, so it was a natural fit for our Stockport and North Kent franchisees to supply planting schemes for the high-tech offices of offshore wind farm developers Danish Oil and Natural Gas (DONG) in Barrow-in-Furness and Ramsgate.

Both schemes use sleek black and grey planters to house a range of plants, including Zamioculcas zamiifolia, Kentia palm and Dracaena. At Ramsgate, Urban Planters North Kent also created a real focal point in the reception, with a stunning driftwood sculpture stood on large grey cobbles, reflecting the role of the sea in DONG's work.

Urban Planters North Kent also provided planting for the offices of one of DONG's partners in the Ramsgate wind farms: Siemens. Here, a mix of live and replica specimens were chosen, to suit the varying light and temperatures throughout the building.