Technology giants seem to be leading the charge in creating more relaxing and natural environments for their workers, and indoor plants and trees are key to this new movement in biophilic workplace design.

Our recent scheme at Amazon Edinburgh is a case in point. Carol in our Edinburgh team worked closely with the building’s designers to fulfil their brief, which could be summarised as simply: ‘as much greenery in as many places as possible to create a homely feel’.

Fully signed up to the health benefits of having plants in the workplace, Amazon wanted to ensure everyone had a view of greenery wherever they are in the office.

“The office houses development teams, where work is intensive and employees rotate shifts around the clock.” Carol explains. “Creating a homely feel using a mixture of greenery and containers should take the edge off the intensity of the work going on here and add to the many proven positive effects of having planting in the workplace.”
SHOWCASING THE MANY WAYS WITH OFFICE PLANTING

The world of office planting is a many-varied thing these days: we can select from a vast range of specimens and containers to up the biophilic feel around your indoor space.

Urban Planters South Yorkshire’s recent scheme at HSBC’s new, purpose-built offices at Grosvenor House in Sheffield is so wide-ranging in its scope, you could almost call it a catalogue of what we offer in the way of interior planting, from free-standing live displays, bespoke planters, artificial plants to all sizes of living and artificial green walls.

Paul Rogers, who worked with the architects from the design stage through the two years to the project’s completion, describes his team’s scheme as “a perfect example of what is possible with office plants.

“While there is a great deal of variety in the planting used here, we have worked hard to ensure that there is a cohesive feel to the scheme, and that it ties in with the different design features around the building.”

The design also features various nods to the natural world, using grass-like carpets and planting motifs on the walls to enhance the overall biophilic feel throughout the building.

“The architects needed no convincing that weaving natural elements into the building design was an important factor,” Paul explains. “They already knew the benefits of providing a connection to nature in the workplace and were keen to work with us to ensure there was plenty of planting throughout the building to enhance wellbeing and productivity.”
RECEPTION AREA
A vast statement wall packs a visual punch as people enter the building.

Making full use of the towering wall and ensuring other design features still stand out, we planted two living walls featuring various textures and colours of foliage to draw the eye upwards.

Underneath, preserved moss was carefully positioned amongst the tiling to create the effect of planting growing through the walls.

On the welcome desk itself, we installed a bespoke integrated planter, designed with a local joinery business, which boasts a mixture of live planting.

In the stairwell, a mixture of artificial green walls along the side of the stairs and suspended plants soften the open space.

OFFICE FLOORS

Each floor has a single specimen of plant throughout the level and a single colour of planter. This serves to orientate people moving from floor to floor and gives each level its own look and feel. Plants are placed throughout the office spaces, ensuring people have a natural element in view wherever they are.

BREAKOUT AREA & MEETING BOOTHs

Working with a local company, we designed lettering frames which we filled with preserved moss to decorate the walls of the staff breakout area.

This adds character and brightness to the space and breaks up long stretches of white wall, too.

In meeting booths, we used trailing artificial plants overhead to soften the look and feel of the space and increase the sense of privacy.
Trailing artificial plants soften the look and feel of the space and increase the sense of privacy for a greener world.
OUTDOOR TERRACE
This space boasts sweeping views over Sheffield which can be enjoyed while protected from the worst of the elements by encompassing glass screens. The planting here has different character, with angular, geometric planters contrasting with soft foliage.
WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE: NEXT-LEVEL BIOPHILIA

There are office plants and then there are urban jungles, and this recent scheme by Urban Planters North West definitely falls into the latter category!

With a rich mix of dense planting seeming to take over this walkway at Social Chain in Manchester, the client’s brief of a jungle experience has been more than met.

Constant jungle sounds add to the sense of rainforest immersion and must provide a very effective breakout moment for workers as they pass through in their busy working day.
Office planting can mean many things these days: eye-poppingly bright planters, upside down displays, home-style plant clusters in rustic pots and vast living walls. However, sometimes a workplace scheme calls for simplicity, as has been perfectly executed by Urban Planters York and North East for CEF in Durham.

Using a selection of concrete-effect containers and grouping single specimens of planting together, Gary Goodman created a scheme which fuses with the ultra-modern industrial design of the building and its decor. Carefully selected planting both softens the view and brings a natural element to the workplace.

The result is a sophisticated scheme which echoes the client’s prestige and celebrates the dynamic architecture in a style that will stand the test of time.
INDUSTRY TRENDS
THE RISE AND RISE OF INFRASTRUCTURE PLANTING

As indoor planting continues to grow in popularity, offering a wealth of both visual and health benefits, so it follows that clients looking to maximise on the positive effects of planting are looking to integrate it into the infrastructure of their buildings.

“At Urban Planters we are getting more and more enquiries about designing infrastructure planting, the most popular being green walls, which we can wrap around most surfaces of a building, both inside and out,” explains Tom Palfreyman, joint Managing Director and Head of National Sales.

“Infrastructure planting requires planning and experienced hands, but it offers a wide range of possibilities. By playing with different textures and tones of foliage, we are able to create all kinds of interesting designs which are big on both visual impact and biophilic benefits.”

Infrastructure planting allows companies to maximise on the number of plants without taking up valuable square footage on the ground. It can also help building owners to attain green building certifications such as BREEAM.

“We often work with architects and builders at the design phase of a new building,” Tom continues. “This ensures conditions such as the lighting and air flow are just right for the plants and means we are able to create something which appears to be part of the building itself: a natural element at home in a built environment. I think this is the future of urban construction: finding an integral place for nature for those of us who are increasingly removed from it.”