



MAINTENANCE STANDARDS

For

Indoor Plants, Containers and Growing Media

Version 29/12/2009

Overview

Developing standards, by which Interior Plantscaping can be judged against quality, is not an easy task. There are many subjective values involved in displays of this type. This short paper is NIPA's first attempt and will over time be modified as feed back or criticism is received.

However these simple standards will give us the ability to label a job as good or bad.

This public document is available to anyone from the NIPA website.

Out of scope

The following areas are considered out of scope:

- Type of planters
- Whether or not leaf shine products are used
- Style of plant (totem, topiary, leafy, tall, bushy etc)
- Age of plant, eg a young Happy Plant has variegated leaves but an older plant may loose the variegation but still be a healthy good looking plant.
- Pruning techniques
- Design
- Customer preference.

Plants

The plant should have healthy growth and vigorous appearance and be actively growing.

The following factors should be addressed as part of the maintenance procedures:

- Dust. The leaves should be clean and dust free with minimal surface chemical on growth and no evidence of overspray on surrounding surfaces
- Dead or brown leaves. The plant should be free of dead or dying material
- All plants are to be replaced when they have (after the acclimatisation process is complete) lost 50% of their original size or foliage from their original form. (See Standard Original Form sketches)
- The deterioration of indoor plants can occur because plants grow towards side light and lose their standard original form. Stand alone plants should be changed when they have more then 50% of their foliage outside the boundaries shown in the sketches

The Figures below simply show good form.



Figure 1 - Chrysalidocarpus lutescens



Figure 2 - Dracaena Fragrans

The sketches below show the deterioration (stretching for light) of indoor plants caused by side light with A being the original form, B affected by light from both sides, and C by light from one side.



A



B



C

- Plants should be chosen for their suitability to indoor environments (required for Green Star Contracts)
- Insect pests. All plants supplied by the plantscaper will be in first class condition and free of pests and diseases prior to installation. Plants on site should show minimal infestation with no appreciable damage to plant.
- Unsightly leaves. This could be due to:
 - disease,
 - water damage,
 - fertilizer burn,
 - physical damage or
 - the leaf being a colour not characteristic of the plant
- Growth. Neat, tidy and healthy in appearance, not overgrown, growth true to species and the shape maintained as per the original or intended form.

Examples:

- a Happy Plant should not lean over,
- a topiary should retain its original shape,
- a philodendron should be balanced and not growing uncontrolled towards the light
- a Kentia Palm should not fall over.

Decorative Containers

The containers should be clean and in good condition.

The following factors addressed as part of the maintenance procedures:

- Dust, dirt and other marks. Decorative containers should be clean and in good condition
- Rubbish. Containers should be free of rubbish
- Pests. Containers should be free of insect pests. All containers supplied by the plantscaper will be in first class condition and clean prior to installation. If however problems and pests are introduced from the environment they should be promptly addressed.



Figure 3 - *Howea forsteriana*



Figure 4 - *Chamaedorea elegans*



Figure 5 - *Rhaps excelsa*

Example:

- The most common problem occurs when food or drink is tipped into the plant containers.
- If planters are supplied by the client the plantscaper will ensure they are clean and free of pests and diseases.
- Containers should be watertight
- Topping (if used). Topping style may vary, but sufficient topping should be used to cover as per design intention. It may be used to cover:
 - growing pot and/or
 - Growing media.
- Damaged or dented containers should be replaced if containers are being hired from plantscaper.

Growing Media

The growing media should have the following factors addressed as part of the maintenance procedures:

- Be of sufficient quantity to support the plant
- Cover the root growth
- Free from pests
- Good condition. The growing media should be:
 - fungi free
 - well aerated
 - hold an adequate supply of nutrients
 - sufficient moisture for the plant
 - retain a suitable ph (required for Green Star Contracts)
 - have no bad odour.

General

The plantscaper shall:

- remove all waste from client sites
- assess plants and identify replacement specimens prior to 10% deterioration. This is to ensure replacement plants are readily available
- response to client complaints or problems should take no longer than 1 working day.



Figure 6 - Spathiphyllum species



Figure 7 - Chamaedorea Seifrizii



Figure 8 - Dracaena marginata