

NEWS

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FROM DETROIT'S GENERAL MOTORS TO GROUND ZERO SCHOOLS, THE
PLANT INDUSTRY WEIGHS IN WITH VITAL
EARTH DAY (Monday, April 22nd) CONTRIBUTIONS

LOS ANGELES (April 16, 2002) - By taking the lead with critical "green" solutions for our earth and her inhabitants, the interior plant industry is being recognized for its high-impact, innovative "Earth Day 2002" contributions. Identified this year for maximizing the benefits of plants in a wide range of environments, the plant industry presented cutting-edge solutions to Fortune 500 corporate campuses, Detroit's industrial waste sites, a senior citizen residence and even to the air at Ground Zero.

General Motors. For the first time in history, the prestigious EMA (Environmental Management Association) award went to an interior plant company. Detroit's Planterra Tropical Greenhouses was honored with this year's EMA award for the firm's outstanding Winter Garden at the General Motors' World Headquarters, Renaissance Center in Detroit. "GM has always recognized that interior plants do a lot more than add aesthetic value," says Planterra's President, Larry Pliska. He adds, "They (GM) have consistently taken advantage of the research verifying that interior plants maximize productivity, clean the air and reduce stress."

The Ford Motor Company also won the top Environmental Achievement Award for its understanding of and commitment to the benefits of plants. Ford's Rouge River Factory takes full advantage of the purification properties inherent in plants, ingeniously using them to filter the site's industrial waste.

Maravilla, a 287-unit senior citizen residence located in Vernon Hills, Ill., is known as the world's largest installation of an organic, indoor rainforest environment. In addition to being recognized as a contributor to "Earth Day 2002," since its opening, the Maravilla project has won numerous awards, including: Interiorscape Magazine - Grand Award - Best Project 2001; the Illinois Landscape Contractors Association 2001 Gold Award for Landscape Excellence; the Florida Nurseryman's Association Grand Award for 2001; and the Associated Landscape Contractors of America Grand Award for 2001.

By creating Maravilla, its owners hoped to provide residents with an environment conducive to cleaner air and healthier living. Dr. Tomer Anbar, one of Maravilla's owners and a principal developer behind the project, cites the air-purifying qualities of interior plants when explaining the impetus behind the facility's creation.

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"Air quality is extremely important with regards to health and longevity," says Dr. Anbar. And by all accounts, the attempt to provide residents with improved air quality at Maravilla has been a total success.

Plants are a part of daily life for Maravilla's residents, many of whom have reported feeling healthier and more energetic since moving into the rainforest environment. It is interesting to note that members of Maravilla's medical staff are benefiting from the facility's tropical foliage as well. "One of our nurses was able to wean herself from asthma medications after she began working here," says Dr. Anbar.

Even visitors to Maravilla are noticing the effects of the rainforest environment, with many commenting on how much better they feel just 30 minutes after they arrive. According to one resident, "It's been wonderful. You feel more energetic. I'm 80 years old, and I want to stay healthy. I want to stay vibrant. Maravilla has brought new life to me, really."

Six schools at Ground Zero. Thousands of plants have been shipped to badly effected schools at Ground Zero (including Stuyvesant High, PS89, IS89, PS234, PS150, Tribeca Learning Center, and the High School of Economics and Finance). Many Pre-K, elementary, middle and high school students were not only displaced from their schools after the attacks, but their homes as well. Serving as more than just "air purifiers," both students and faculty report that the plants have provided them with a source of comfort and inspiration as they strive to forge ahead in the post-attack world.

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Plants at Work is a national information campaign working to inform professionals and the public about the important benefits of interior plants. Press contact: MJ Gilhooley, Focal Point Communications, Phone: (800) 347-9014, E-Mail: mj@plantsatwork.org, or visit www.plantsatwork.org.