



Virginia Green Industry Council

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Contact: Virginia Green Industry Council

540-382-0943

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www.viriniagreen.org

## Corporations Realize Economic Benefits from Plants and Landscaping

Businesses across the U.S. are learning to place greater value on interior and exterior landscaping. Corporate landscapes can be a means to increase profits as well as a resource for relaxation, recreation and cultural opportunities.

Longwood Graduate Fellow Dana Parker's article, "The Corporate Garden," published in *The Role of Horticulture in Human Well-Being*, reports that the economics of the office building is shifting in favor of enhanced work environments. Businesses realize that the physical environment affects employees' ability and desire to work. Additionally, businesses know that employee benefits and amenities are methods of attracting and retaining high-quality employees.

### Important Recruiting Tool

Both the Codex Corporation and the John Deere Company consider high-quality design and the landscape as their most important recruiting tool. The Deere atrium has been acknowledged as one of the best of its kind for enhancing the work environment. Deere's management credits the improved environment for the company's increase in productivity, morale and pride.

Businesses find the financial implications to be quite attractive. The costs associated with landscapes are legitimate business deductions. Corporations can also deduct charitable contributions to lower their taxable incomes. For example, the Rhododendron Species Foundation on the property of the Weyerhaeuser Corporation is a not-for-profit foundation that receives land, funds and facilities from the corporation. The innovative partnership provides benefits for the corporation and the foundation.

Zoning regulations can also offer similar financial opportunities. Many cities encourage private development of public spaces such as atria, plazas and parks. New York City utilized this type of zoning and allowed IBM to build a bamboo court in exchange for additional height. IBM's increased floor space led to obvious financial gain.

### Tangible Aspect of Corporate Culture

"Health cost and fitness considerations are placing new importance on the office landscape as a resource for active and passive enjoyment," explains Parker. "Research by an anthropologist at an office park in New Jersey showed that people place a high value on the beauty of the landscape and the recreational or social activities that it affords."

Many corporations are reappraising their approach to the people on which their profits rely--their employees, clients and in many cases, the general public. These businesses use landscaping as part of concern for the office environment as well as an indication of their success. Interior and exterior landscapes become a "tangible aspect of 'corporate culture.'"

The Associated Landscape Contractors of America (ALCA) houses a complete bibliography and partial library of over 500 studies on a multitude of horticultural subjects. The research, conducted at doctoral and graduate levels at universities and colleges around the world, documents the emergence of plants and all related professions as one of the most important issues of the '90s.

Go to our consumer website for additional gardening information at [www.VirginiaGardening.com](http://www.VirginiaGardening.com)

The Virginia Green Industry Council is the voice of the horticulture industry in the Commonwealth and is dedicated to enhancing the beauty of the state's environment, the well-being of our citizens, improving our state's economy, and improving the health and wellness for everyone in Virginia. The Council is made up of providers and consumers of horticultural products and services. The Council works to provide public and industry education, environmental guidelines and other information that will keep Virginia green and growing. For more information,

visit [www.viriniagreen.org](http://www.viriniagreen.org). 540-382-0943 FAX: 540-382-2716 E-mail:[info@viriniagreen.org](mailto:info@viriniagreen.org)

Virginia Green Industry Council  
383 Coal Hollow Rd  
Christiansburg, VA 24073-6721