

Biophilia and the Wellbeing Benefits of Biophilic Design

Biophilia is a word we are going to hear a lot more of in relation to the built environment. Biophilia is described by Edward O Wilson as the urge to affiliate with other forms of life. There is increasing evidence from research that identifies the positive benefits of the ability to interact with nature in the built environment. This ranges from improved productivity to an increase in recovery rates for illness.

It has been shown that ill health and lack of well-being can result in poor performance and productivity, lost work time and increased costs. In the UK, work-related stress accounts for 35% of ill health and 43% of absenteeism, costing organisations an estimated £29 billion annually.

Biophilic Design captures the human requirement for connection to nature and the living world, even looking at pictures of natural scenes has the ability to promote enhanced mood. Biophilic Design should be incorporated into the workspace design at the outset of the design process in order to be fully incorporated into the facility and avoid being treated as an 'add in' or 'nice to have'.



Example of interior green wall



Wall decoration in an internal room without windows

Core Principles

- Natural light – where available
- Human centric lighting (matched to Circadian rhythms)
- Providing a connection to the natural environment
- Use of natural materials
- Natural colours
- Soft planting

Reference – Terrapin Bright Green identify 14 patterns in supporting stress reduction, cognitive performance, emotion and mood enhancement and the human body.

Benefits

- Improved well-being
- Improved productivity
- Enhanced learning comprehension and creativity
- Lower stress levels
- Increased recovery rates from illness

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