

## How plants affect the way people use indoor space



Interior plants have been used as natural sign posts in many buildings - they can guide people or highlight specific parts of a building, such as exits or merchandise. Another way that plants affect the way people use space is the way that they appear to attract people to them.

Studies in waiting rooms and reception areas have shown that seats closest to indoor plants are chosen preferentially (and even occupied for longer) - even if those seats are in an otherwise less satisfactory location than the seats that are not close to plants. Some observations have even shown a preference for people to be amongst the foliage rather than looking at it - in other words sitting next to, or in front of, plants rather than sitting opposite them.

We know from EO Wilson's Biophilia studies that people seek environments that offer shelter and refuge, and our natural history suggests that vegetation would be a good place to find it. So it comes as no surprise to find that in buildings with plants, when people are observed and their choices mapped, a preference to be among those plants is strongly expressed.