

Plants at work.

THE FRENCHAMS GROUP NEWSLETTER

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An Innovative 'Green' Recipe for Success



The rapid expansion of The Frenchams Group New South Wales, since its inception in 1998, has in the main been driven by the innovative strategies of NSW Managing Director Gerard Verge. Gerard's initial combination of robust marketing and strategic acquisition of smaller plantscaping companies has resulted in the brand now being recognised as the market leader in NSW.

The advent of the Green Building Council and an architectural focus on a well designed 'green' environment have prompted many changes in the industry since Gerard first moved to Sydney from Melbourne. Gerard said 'there can be no complacency in an ever changing market and our clients have come to expect quality service and innovation in planter design. We are inspired by our customer's enthusiasm for our cutting edge designs and are proud to deliver a superior outcome for their tenancies'.

In fact Gerard's new 'green wall' pot is the envy of his competitors, as is a planter range that is the most extensive of all the interior plantscaping companies in Australia, Gerard said 'I take particular pride in the amount of time and degree of expertise invested to expand the planter design to ensure we meet and exceed customer expectations'.

The Frenchams Group is set apart from its competitors not only by the dedicated staff and enviable planter range, but also by their 'continual improvement' methodology, ensuring staff are correctly trained with a focus on OH&S and on nurturing outstanding long term customer relationships. Gerard said 'we believe we have a recipe for success and will continue to aim high to ensure we are the front runner in our industry'.

The changing face of green – vertical gardens



A recent innovation in indoor landscaping is the ‘vertical garden’: walls of plants which maintain all the positives of bringing plants indoors, while dramatically transforming a space.

Described by Frenchams’ CEO Tony Gerraty as the ‘best way of maximising the benefits of indoor plants’, there’s been some great recent uptake of the Frenchams green wall.

Tony comments that a huge benefit is being able to fit a lot of plants in a smaller area, particularly where floor space is limited.

Frenchams provides the complete service for their green wall customers: assessing the area and supplying the wrought iron structure to hold the pots, then fitting the many plants that slot into the pots, as well, of course, ongoing maintenance. 🌱

Taking indoor plantscaping to new heights, the Frenchams green wall makes a real statement.



Client Profile **Plants for the World**

‘The key to my recommendation is the longevity of the relationship,’ says Rob Collins from the World Trade Centre when asked about the ten year association between the WTC and Frenchams. The WTC complex boasts extensive office areas (housing tenants such as Thales Australia, Thales Land Groups, Victoria Police and the Australian Taxation Office), numerous restaurants, cafes and even a child care centre.

Frenchams provide and maintain the plants in the external gardens, along the

river walk and in the internal common areas. Recently the WTC has developed more of the waterfront, the addition of plants in these spaces has provided an aesthetic link between the river and the building.

Frenchams staff assist Rob in the design and selection of plants in any new development. It’s a service that adds real value. And as for that long relationship? Well Rob sees Anthony Kelly and Christine Strachan, Frenchams’ technicians at the WTC, as just two more members of his team. 🌱



Grow something!

With climate change plants are part of the solution ...

There are many benefits of growing plants as we in this industry know. But we rarely tell the gardening public about them. I'd like to enlist your help to spread the message far and wide.

Health: children play more creatively in a natural environment and parents are more likely to join in.

Social/public safety: areas with higher levels of planting experience lower levels of crime.

Environmental: trees and shrubs absorb polluting chemicals such as nitrous oxide and ozone through their leaves while releasing oxygen through photosynthesis. House plants do this too.

Economic: the value of a property can be up to 20% higher in areas planted with trees.

Fresh is best: there has been a huge swing to grow your own fruit and vegetables in recent years. It's up to us to assist home gardeners in becoming successful. Picking your own fresh produce is better for your health and hopefully your pocket.

I am sure you all know of other great benefits from growing something. It's up to all of us in the media to publicise these benefits. It's so important that we help our audiences/customers to become successful with their plants. There is little doubt that we have lost a generation of gardeners because it all looks too hard, but we can get them back if we highlight the benefits.

Think about these facts:

- research has found that house plants effected reductions in office workers incidences of: coughs and fatigue by 37%; ear, nose and throat symptoms by 23%
- a well-planned landscape can reduce your heating and cooling costs by up to 20%. 🌱

Article supplied courtesy of Greenworld Magazine April/May 2011 Issue.





Franchisee Profile

Frenchams Queensland
North Brisbane and north to the Sunshine Coast

Wayne Mahoney loves the freedom that comes with his own franchise. After working in landscaping for years, six years ago he saw the opportunities in being a franchisee – for its family friendliness and also being his own boss.

He describes it as a kind of 'supported independence'; 'sometimes I won't see anyone from the company for months but then just today I had a good touch base with Bob, the Queensland manager, and got right up-to-date.'

The variety of the work is a drawcard too, with clients of all different sizes and needs. Wayne likes the one-on-one contact he has with people, whether from huge organisations or small. And his clients obviously appreciate his work too – with lots of referrals keeping business going.

As for the challenges, the juggle of many clients can be tricky, but sometimes the unpredictability of a certain job 'can be a good thing too'. 🌱

Staff Profile

Mark Thompson
Frenchams Sydney

Mark Thompson was working as a groundskeeper at a couple of large estates in England when his lifetime interest in gardening really took hold. On Mark's return to Australia, he eventually found his way to Frenchams' Sydney operation where, in 2007, he was engaged as a plant technician.

Mark loves working for the family orientated Frenchams business and considers his mentor Gerard Verge as a 'big brother'. Developing on his superior talents as a plant technician, Mark has now extended his repertoire of skills to include being a supervisor, involved in operations and scheduling and a member of the Installation Team. One of the things he enjoys most is being involved in a new job from the beginning. 'I get a real sense of achievement after fitting out a new installation,' says Mark, 'it makes a real difference to their working environment.' 🌱



Useful tips

If your rooms don't have enough light for indoor plants, artificial plant lighting may be the solution.

Artificial lighting can supplement natural daylight or even replace it during the winter months when the days are shorter and the intensity of light is much lower. Artificial lights provide the sun's spectrum of wavelengths.

Fluorescent lights are efficient because they provide the type of light that plants need for photosynthesis. Most plants require a minimum of 12 hours of light each day and remember to keep foliage plants at least 30cm below the lights to avoid burning. Just like a baby crying, your plants will let you know if more light is needed. 🌱

Look out for tips on watering in our next issue!



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