

Fifteen Years and Counting - with One Voice

4.3.16

This week we have circulated the following press release to the horticulture and FM sectors. It's already appeared in the online version of [Horticulture Week](#), [Pro Landscaper](#), [The Florist](#), [Tomorrow's FM](#) and page 8 of April's edition of [Qube Magazine](#).

PRESS RELEASE

efig, the European Federation of Interior Landscape Groups is celebrating its 15th anniversary.

The organisation was formed to offer one voice to speak for the interior landscaping industry as a whole and to promote the many benefits of plants to the working public in particular.

How we got started

A group of interior landscape businesses put their heads together to form the association. This was prompted by a furore around the fit-out costs of Portcullis House including the 12 large Ficus trees installed in the atrium.



The cost of the trees was considered astronomical and the trees were seen as purely decorative for the MP's new home. A case of government over-spending for their own. Several spoke out about the benefits the trees offered.



This was the incentive that informed the group to form efig to speak out in future cases like this.

efig's Chairman Ian Drummond of Indoor Garden Design explains, *"We needed an official body to speak out in defence of our industry and to educate the business community and others."*

"I, like many of my industry colleagues, have been involved since the beginning."

"At least now there is much more concern about surrounding ourselves with nature with many outside of the industry championing this for health reasons."

12 years later

Almost 12 years later to the day, the murmurings about the cost of these trees cropped up again.

With cuts rife and the word austerity at the top of everyone's mind, the annual rental of these huge trees was seen as a government extravagance.

Our chairman at the time, Kenneth Freeman of Ambius wrote letters and appeared on Radio 4 and BBC2 in discussions to explain the importance of the trees in that location.

He finally succeeded in meeting the Government Estates Department and sending a full report to them. The trees remained and a better deal was negotiated for the landscaper involved.

An on-going cause

Over the years, we have campaigned tirelessly to raise awareness of our need for plants both inside and outside. This has meant responding to government and the media when plants have not been recognised for their many qualities beyond pure aesthetics.

With recent news about the quality of indoor air 'killing' us, it seems there is still work to be done which is where efig comes in.

"A strong trade association working constantly to promote the benefits of plants in the working environment is essential," comments vice chair Chris Jenkin of Enterprise Plants.



"With the recognition of our need to connect with nature, otherwise known as biophilia, for our physical and mental wellbeing, we are confident that this is the way forward. efig will certainly be striving to send this message to business leaders and the wider community in the future."

Celebration

Of course, efig will celebrate this 15th anniversary milestone starting with a 'garden party'. This event will not only celebrate the anniversary but also efig's deserving award winners at their annual gala dinner on 22 April.

