Making living walls work harder.

Living walls are now a well-recognised part of our urban landscape, popping up in cities throughout the UK and the rest of the planet.

The high aesthetic of living walls brings a wow factor to both exterior and interior living wall projects, this is great, but – and there is a big BUT – living walls offer an opportunity to bring far more advanced functionality than just ‘beauty’. We have known this for a long time here at Scotscape and always design the plant content of our living walls to have a horticultural function, to bring maximum air quality improvement benefits, boost biodiversity or support key pollinators.

What do we do to make our living walls work hard for their space?

At the Scotscape HQ we trial different living wall designs, content and application. We have been trialling the woodland wall for the last year, which is an adaptation of the original Fytotextile living wall system used in all of our projects. Typically constructed with 49 pockets per square meter, the system was adapted to contain larger planting pockets (nine per square meter) – this has allowed for much larger species to be included in the living wall system – creating a wilder look but crucially creating a varied typography on the living wall which is key to improving particulate matter deposition. As polluted air passes through the varied horticultural content of our walls, it follows a journey through key plants such as stachy and pinus, who’s hairy and sticky leaves grab particulate matter, residue can then be further captured in the leaves of larger species such as sumac and the waxy fatsia.

Putting Living Wall research into practice

The trial of this adapted living wall has now been incorporated in a recent living wall installation we have carried out for Team London Bridge at the Orchard Lisle building at Guys and St Thomas’s. A swathe off larger specimens navigate from the top right to the bottom left of this stunning green wall. In an area dogged by pollution it brings a breath of fresh air – literally.

Horticultural content and plant typography are key to mitigating damaging particulate matter in city air. When considering the impact that particulate matter can have on infant lung development the incorporation of living walls which ‘work hard for their space’ within schoolslocated in areas with poor air quality is an important consideration. Of course, it is not only children who benefit from strategic urban greening, city dwellers experience a boost to psychological health and wellbeing when surrounded by green with added air quality benefits thrown in.


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