**Plants keep us healthy and the air clean**

A study conducted in Norway found that potted plants improved the health of office workers; i.e. plants reduce stress thus reducing the number of sick days workers take.

The study was conducted by the researchers from the Agricultural University of Norway with results offering more evidence that plants in the workplace are good for the office environment and the health of the workers.

Tina Bringslimark, expert in environmental psychology, analysed 305 office workers in 3 offices, each of which had differing amounts of greenery.

“We investigated the amount of self-reported sick leave and compared it with the amounts of plants they could see from their desk. The more plants they could see, the less self-reported sick leave was recorded,” said Ms Bringslimark. Performing the study at the Norwegian institution, it also showed that plants were able to lower fatigue, prevent dry throats, headaches, coughs and dry skin amongst the office workers.

Professor Grete Pail, working at the Agricultural University of Norway, outlined that there might be several explanations to these beneficial effects of the planted rooms:

“Possibly the most straight forward is that plants and the microbes in their soil are good at removing volatile organic compounds found in the air that can affect health. There could also be a psychological explanation in that people believe plants are healthier and are likely to evaluate their own health more optimistically,” he commented.

This research carries on from earlier research by Prof Tove Fjeldat the same university. Over four studies – in an office, schools and a hospital = Fjeld like Bringslimark found that plants in the workplace reduced minor symptoms as detailed above.

She also found that the air was cleaner in the planted rooms and that planting could have a very positive effect on sick leave; following the study in the hospital x-ray department sicknes was reduced by more than 60%

*Source: coinsdig.com and The Daily Telegraph*