



Greening Up Your Storefront

Research on how greening improves inner-city business districts concludes that it has a dramatic impact. Property values can increase by as much as 30%, according to an ongoing study undertaken by the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania's Real Estate Department. Independent merchants in inner-city neighborhood business districts now face competitive pressure from regional malls, "big box" retailers, and internet businesses. How can local merchants get their slice of the economic pie?

Studies have shown that consumers are willing to spend 12% or more for goods purchased in landscaped urban areas versus barren streetscapes. They are also willing to drive to greener shopping areas and pay more for parking in order to have a greener shopping experience. Consumers value green streetscapes, and will pay more to shop in them. Yet in many instances, small business owners overlook the contributions of vegetation to retail success, instead focusing on the annoyances of maintaining it and security issues. Who can afford such shortsightedness in the face of retail competition today?

What You and Your Merchant Association Can Do to Improve Your Streetscape

- Enter the Greenest Block in Brooklyn Contest and request a Street Gardening Clinic on your block
- Devise a regular watering schedule for vegetation on the block
- Use Sub-Irrigated Planters (SIPs) to save time and water (see GreenBridge's "Intro to Sub-Irrigated Planters" tip sheet and www.insideurbangreen.org)
- Start an Adopt-a-Planter and Adopt-a-Tree program to care for planters and tree pits
- Plant new trees and care for existing trees
- Reach out to neighborhood youth to maintain plantings
- Buy plants collectively at nurseries or from the annual GrowNYC Plant Sale for distribution to storeowners (<http://www.grownyc.org/openspace/plantsale>)
- Clean up any vacant lots in your neighborhood and turn them into community gardens

Websites for Buying Plant Containers

<http://www.bignyc.org/> Build It Green! NYC
www.bigpots.com Big Pots.com
www.palmettoplanters.com Palmetto Planters
www.godawn.com Dawn Concrete and Store Products
www.bigplanters.com BigPlanters.com
www.gardeners.com Gardener's Supply Company
www.windowbox.com Windowbox.Com
www.homedepot.com Home Depot – planters & accessories
www.kornegaydesign.com Kornegay Design
www.cedarwoodfurniture.com Adams All Natural Cedar
www.mastergardenproducts.com/cedarvilla.htm Master Garden Products
www.eco-gardening.com Green Culture
www.cilibertoswoodworking.com Ciliberto's Woodworking

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