



The challenge of the tall ones

There are times that we seek company and sometimes we need to be alone. And then there are times you need to spend among the green ones – being at one with nature, to be among the plants and trees in the outdoors... to connect.

Let's take it for granted that we all love plants... well most of us anyway, but sometimes we want a big one to connect to. More specifically – a tree! But it is not always practical or possible to go outside when you get the “tree-hugging” feeling. So we take on the challenge of bringing them indoors... into our homes, our offices and our shopping malls.

A tree that lives and thrives indoors gives the immediate environment a decorative high point that you could hardly attain with anything else, not to mention the (green) peace it brings as a “big” plant.

Bringing tall trees (four metres and up) indoors, could be challenging but four metres has been done successfully for





decades by the professionals, and yes – it has to be PLANNED by a professional!

Firstly you would need adequate space to bring the tall trees inside, and atriums are ideal public areas to apply this natural “oxygen manufacturing” statement. This is applicable above and below floor or soil level. How much growing up and sideways space is needed, is the big consideration here, as well as the rooting system which has to be dealt with. Roots can be aggressive but professional planning and utilizing decent big tree planting containers which are now available, could open up new tall tree possibilities not previously considered.

If not planting in an open air atrium, there will be the issue of light, and you may need to bring in additional light to supply the full spectrum in order to widen the choices of tree options for indoors.

Watering is a serious issue to contend with, but dealing with a professional tall tree company makes all the difference, as their experience will supply clear guidelines of which watering system will be the most beneficial for the specific situation.

Feeding the tall ones food to grow stronger is a must, but once again the choice of tree will determine the complexity of nutrition needed. Introducing the correct fertilizer into the soil when



planting the trees should be sufficient for the first few weeks or months, but it will require some monitoring to establish the health progress of the trees in their new environment.

Some indoor trees require a lot of cleaning and pruning where others are maintenance free, but there is always some degree of care and attention needed.

And yes, there may have to be some insect management system in place... checking for bugs, nasty sap-sucking parasites or even if it's just sweeping cobwebs off your favourite big cactus plant – there will be critters.

Most successful tree options used indoors in South Africa include: *Garcinia gerrardii* (Forest Mangosteen); *Trichilia emetica* (Natal Mahogany); a few varieties of *Dracaena* (Dragon Tree); most of the Palm tree species and a wide variety of *Ficus* tree options (Fig species).

Six point checklist summary for planting tall trees indoors:

- Adequate space above and below soil.
- Full spectrum light levels are a must.
- Sufficient but not over-watering.
- Quality fertilizer as needed.
- Professional pruning & cleaning. dw
- Insect management as needed.

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