

Connection to Nature

Healthy

Credit: 15

Points: 2

Outcome

The building fosters connection to nature for building occupants.

Criteria

Credit Achievement	1 point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The building provides views. The building includes indoor plants and incorporates nature-inspired design. or 5% of the building's regularly occupied areas / or site area (whichever is greater) is allocated to nature in which occupants can directly engage with.
---------------------------	--------------------	---

Exceptional Performance	1 point	<p>In conjunction with the <i>Credit Achievement</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The building provides views. The building includes indoor plants and incorporates nature-inspired design. 5% of the building's regularly occupied areas / or site area (whichever is greater) is allocated to nature in which occupants can directly engage with.
--------------------------------	--------------------	---

Additional information

Stage implementation

Strategy	Brief	Concept	Design	Tender	Construction	Handover	Use
----------	-------	---------	--------	--------	--------------	----------	-----

Synergies with other credits

- Biodiversity Enhancement

Sustainable Development Goals

- Goal 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing)
- Goal 15 (Life on Land)

Relevant reporting initiatives

- None

Regularly occupied areas

This credit applies to all regularly occupied areas in the building – those continuously occupied or occupied for more than two hours (previously known as ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’ spaces) including living and sleeping areas. Areas that are either transient or accessed intermittently such as corridors, storage, back of house or plant rooms can be excluded. Spaces can also be excluded if the use of the space (for example, a laboratory) justifies specific visual conditions – a Technical Question must be submitted to the NZGBC for confirmation. A space can be excluded if the applicable Standard recommends that specialist advice be sought, such as in a theatre.

Requirements

Credit Achievement

The project must comply with **both** of the following criteria:

- Views
- With **one** of the following criteria:
 - Plants & Nature-inspired Design
 - Interaction with Nature

Views

At least 60% of regularly occupied areas must have a clear line of sight to a high quality internal or external view. All floor areas within 8m from a compliant view meet this credit criterion.

Plants & Nature-inspired Design

Plants

Indoor plants must be provided in regularly occupied areas. One or more plants in pots with a soil surface area totalling at least 500cm² for every 15m² of the regularly occupied spaces is required.

As alternative to soil surface area method, the pot diameter method can be used as a method of demonstrating compliance with the credit criteria. As a minimum, for every 10 m² of the nominated area, the diameter of the pots must be equal to at least 300mm in diameter. A combination of different pot sizes is acceptable, provided the diameter of all the pots combined is greater than or equal to 300mm for every 10m² of the nominated area.

An ongoing maintenance plan must be established to ensure plant health is maintained. The contract must include:

- A 2-year contract with a plant maintenance contractor to enact the plan
- A schedule of plants within the nominated space
- Service intervals
- Policy regarding the maintenance of soil moisture, pH, nutrients, and pests
- Diseased plant replacement policy
- Cutting back of old growth; plants changed if needed
- Cleaning requirements and commitments

Nature-inspired design

Five additional nature-inspired design interventions must be provided in alignment with the following principles:

- Elements that provide multiple natural sensory experiences
- Elements that reflect natural and cultural patterns and forms

- Using natural materials
- Large scale and holistically incorporated natural motifs and art

Project teams must provide a narrative against a set of design principles to show how the project's ambition for nature inspired design has been embedded from design concept stage.

Interaction with Nature

Occupants can interact with nature either inside the building, or externally through a green façade (or wall) or garden.

At least 5% of the building's regularly occupied areas or land within the site boundary (whichever is greater) must be planted area (either vertical or horizontal).

The allocated area must be accessible and have the necessary infrastructure to allow the activity to occur (for example water source/ taps for irrigation, storage area for tools and equipment).

Exceptional Performance

In conjunction with the *Credit Achievement*, the project must comply with **all three** of the following criteria:

- Views
- Plants & Nature-inspired Design
- Interaction with Nature

See *Credit Achievement* requirements for further information.

Submission content

Submissions for this credit must contain:

- **Submission form**
- **Evidence** to support claims made in the submission

Recommended evidence:

- Drawings showing access to views and/or line-of-site showing that no obstructions exist
- As build drawings showing the location of plants in the space
- Extracts from the ongoing management plan for plants
- Narrative of the five nature-inspired design features including design principles setting the project's ambition for connection to nature, along with evidence to support claims
- Evidence of how occupants can interact with nature (e.g., site plans showing green roofs)

Alternate documentation can also be used by project teams to demonstrate compliance.

The recommended evidence listed above is applicable to the as built submission. See the Design Assessment section in the Introduction for more information on submitting evidence for the Design assessment.

The key requirement is that evidence is provided to support each claim made within the Submission form.

Guidance

Relationship with *Biodiversity Enhancement* credit

Biodiversity Enhancement focuses on external landscaping that promotes biodiversity (i.e., diverse, resilient etc). This credit instead deals with internal planting, with green roofs and facades an exception. The credits are not mutually exclusive and can be used in

conjunction with one another. For example, should an accessible green roof comply with the requirements of the *Biodiversity Enhancement* credit, it can be used towards compliance in both credits.

External landscaping that is captured as part of the *Biodiversity Enhancement* credit may only be claimed in this credit under the 'Views' criterion (that is, as a high-quality external view).

Views

The line-of-sight shall be measured by extending a perpendicular line from the view, be it a window, opening or internal view. A line at 45° can be used at the corners of the view. The thickness of the external walls must be considered in the calculations.

Internal or external columns can be ignored.

Plants requirement

If a space is completely enclosed on all sides and smaller than 25m², such as a meeting room, this space can be excluded. The use of plants in enclosed areas cannot contribute towards achieving the required number of plants in areas neighbouring this space.

Plants within an open plan space should be distributed throughout as far as possible. An ongoing maintenance plan must be established to ensure plant health is maintained.

While the 'Plants' requirement deals with indoor plants specifically, green roofs or internal green walls are deemed to comply with the credit. External plants may only contribute 50% towards compliance with the credit and must be accessible to building occupants. This ensures that planting is still provided internally, where occupants spend most of their time.

Nature-inspired Design

Using design elements to connect people to nature builds on the other aspects of this credit. Project teams can demonstrate this through design drawings, specifications and a narrative supporting the principles listed in the credit. The 'Biophilic Design Guidebook' by the Living Building Institute, as referenced below, contains design principles that can be used as a guide when developing these design strategies and responses.

Fitout scope – Credit Achievement or Exceptional Performance

Regularly occupied spaces include tenanted spaces. Projects must include tenant fitouts for at least 80% of GFA to target points. For any excluded tenancies or cold shell spaces, project teams must provide a Tenancy Fitout Guide outlining the benefits of including plants in tenant fitouts. Requirements for Nature Inspired Design, Views and Interaction with Nature must be met by the base building and cannot rely on tenants to deliver outcomes. For more information, see the Fitout Scope section.

Definitions

Internal views

A high-quality internal view is defined as a view towards an area that is landscaped or contains a water feature, or an atrium. A landscaped area must contain either high plant density, xeriscape gardens or arid climate landscaping. The landscaping may be horizontal or vertical.

External Views

A high-quality external view is defined as extending to the outside towards natural elements such as large bodies of vegetation, a body of water, the sky or frequent movement of people, vehicles, or animals.

Supporting information

The following resource supports this credit:

- [Biophilic Design Guidebook](#)
- Better Building Partnership Green Leasing: <https://www.betterbuildingspartnership.com.au/projects/green-leasing/>
- Chapter 4 of Emissions reduction plan, Ministry for the Environment
- NZ Biodiversity strategy
- Nature Based Urban Design for Wellbeing and Adaptation in Oceanica