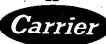
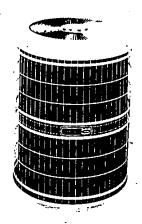
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PlanTerra Think big as in RenCen

By SUZIE ROLLINS

Sophistication has hit residential plant owners. The days are over when they settled for small greenery throughout their homes. Today, they demand large, high quality, one-of-a-kind specimens.

That's the word from Steve

That's the word from Steve George, 30, co-owner of PlanTera, a tropical greenhouse in Troy. George, and his partner Larry Pliska, 32, are credited with doing the "interior scaping" of Detroit's Renaissance Center and Plaza Hotel, Twelve Oaks Mall in Novi, the Northfield Hilton and Sheffield Office Plaza in Troy, Eastland, Northland and numerous residences.

The pair, both natives of Birmingham, have been in business five years, and George says that his residential accounts which encompass 25 percent of his total business has changed drastically.

"People are more aware of all the differnt types of plants available. They are getting away from che., rinky-dink small stuff,"
George notes. "A resident will usually spend about \$200 for one
plant, and then buy some smaller
plants to go along with it."
Commercial businesses have

Commercial businesses have also changed their outlook on greenery, George explains. Although they will usually spend a little less for a major plant, around \$85 he says, they are filling their offices with lush foliage.

"Architects have also changed the commercial business. Today they are designing buildings with plants in mind. They put in skylights and atriums, which is a change over the last few years where they designed the buildings then just scattered the plants around," he explains.

RENCEN HAS been PlanTerra's largest account, totaling nearly \$500,000 when the job was finally completed. They contractedd the work in March 1977 and finished dit in March 1979.

PlanTerra planted 220 ficus

benjaminas, 10,000 ivies, two dozen kenitas and 800 flowering mums in the gigantic office structure. During the first year, 25 trees died, and during the second year six trees were lost.

George attributes the minimal loss, 10 percent and average, he says, to the trees' inabilitity to adjust to their interior environment. Some of the ivy, however, has experienced tremendous growth, reaching 25 feet in the two years.

"Most of the mistakes made in the building as far as the plants" are concerned were architectual," George says. "When we first planted, there weren't any drainage or irrigation systems built in, but they are there now."

Calling their greenhouse, "the most exotic in the midwest," George prides himself on their specially hand-picked plants. "We go down to Florida our-

"We go down to Florida ourselves and pick the plants," he adds.

In PlanTerra's 12,000-foot greenhouse, thousands of plants are for sale to commercial businesses and the public. They range in size from three inches tall to 12 feet high and are priced from 89 cents to \$899.

"We have a Pony Tail palm that is 30 years old, 10 feet tall and very rare which is \$899," he explains.

George says he and his partner do most of the plant work themselves, with the help of their fiveperson, full-time staff. They also write maintenance contracts for service.

Their huge success, he says, is attributed to their giant greenhouse which displays their tropical delights and their aggressive salesmenship.

"We have so many plants that when people come in here, they always buy something," he adds.

First aid for trees

(Continued from page 12)

options, he suggests. When choosing plants, you can avoid tree species that are especially prone to ice and wind damage. Instead of willows, silver maples and quickgrowing elms, plant oaks, lindens or hard maples. They withstand ice and wind very well.

Maintain trees properly to keep them strong and healthy. And prune them while they're young to remove weak V-shaped crotches, Right-angle or U-shaped crotches are stronger and less likely to split than narrow V-haped ones.



