Planterra from page 5B

tributes states that "It takes about 15 to 20 spider plants to clean and refresh the air in the average 1,800-aquare-foot home." That translates into a lot of spider plants in a 100,000-square-foot mall.

"At Somerset, we aimed to enhance the close relationship between architecture and landscape in our design," he said. "The display features an elegant ambience of architectural details as well as showing off the form, texture, and color of individual plants."

color of individual plants."

Jody Stevenson of Troy, a Somjest shopper, took a break from
the clearance sales and bought acup of coffee at Gloria Jean's. As
she sipped the brew, she commented on the mall'a sward-winning horticulture: "The plants at
Somerset are so elegant. Most of
them are planted in cream-colthements are so elegant. Most of
them are planted in creamcolthements are verywhere. My favorite spot is here, above the
retunds, where those huge palm
trees rise up to the skydome."

The 35-foot-tall balm trees are

The 35-foot-tail paim trees are actually preserved palms from southern California, according to Pliska. "They look so real, I hate to give away the secret. However, all the other species of plant around the mall are very real and thriving." around th thriving.'

Tropical plants sold today are hardy and healthy due to years of research and genetic engineering. Plieka said. His plants come from Hawaii and Florida and are grown under filters to get them ready for Michigan and Indoor living.

Walking through Planterra's 20,000-square-feet of greenhouse on Drake, north of 14 Milo, is a tropical tract. Living sculptures reach to the steamy celling panes, and every type of moss and forn thrives below. Various varieties of palms and cacti flourish, taking off from mother plants and wandering up stone wells and down brick walkways. Pliska moves through the variegacted aliaborishing off wilted leaves and peeling back dying stalks.

"Ours in a labor of love" he

peeling back dying status.

"Ours is a labor of love," he said of his 45-member staff, "Part of our job is maintaining and changing the plants that we put into offices, homes and shopping centers. Plants are a lot of work. They take a long time to get the lush look we love. Some of my older figs and ficuses are valued between \$1,600 and \$2,500."

In addition to interiorscaping The Somerset Collection in Troy, Planterra has greened-up The Galleria in Southfield, the Renai-sance Center in Detroit, the First Center Office Plaza in Southfield and the Embassy Suites and and the Embas Marriott hotels.

Marriott hotels.

Pliska is passionate about what he calls "getting he word out."

"Florists and all plant people should be working to let people know that chemicals are part of our society and we can't get away from them, but plants can help reduce their dangers. Plants are healthy for people.

"I get a lot of satisfaction as a human being by making my living and knowing I'm helping people out."



The Observer/ MONDAY, JANUARY 24, 1994

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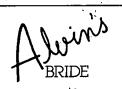
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