



Gemma McQuade from Dawson's Garden World is ready to help workers "plant" themselves at their desks. Picture: Simon Santi www.communitypix.com.au/d350615

Turning over new leaf

STAFF at Dawson's Garden World in Joondalup are preparing for a rush on office plants as Australia celebrates the inaugural Plant Life Balance Day tomorrow.

A national survey of 400 workers found two-thirds preferred an office with plants but more than half did not have greenery in their own work area.

Nursery and Garden Industry Australia responded by introducing the special day to promote the benefits of plants in the workplace.

Chief executive Robert Prince said more than half of respondents felt plants provided cleaner air and improved

workers' positiveness.

"One in three went so far as saying they have more energy at work when plants are around and they are certain plants help them work more productively," he said.

"That is an incredibly powerful message for all employers about the use of plants to improve their office environment, boost morale and increase productivity."

Professor Margaret Burchett and Plant Environmental Quality Group colleagues at Sydney's University of Technology have given foliage "two green thumbs up" for removing pollutants.

"Volatile organic com-

pounds (VOCs) emitted from plastic or synthetic materials in office furniture, fittings, computers and printers can cause headaches, loss of concentration and eye, nose and throat problems," she said.

"Carbon dioxide has been linked to drowsiness.

"Our research has proved that office plants can reduce VOCs by 80 per cent and carbon dioxide by up to 25 per cent, so the health benefits are significant."

Suggestions for office plants include antherium, bromeliad, Zanzibar gems, mother-in-law's tongue, fiddle-leaf figs and the china doll plant.