

[JIM MUMFORD](#)

Business owner also known as eco entrepreneur

By **JAMES PALEN**, The Daily Transcript
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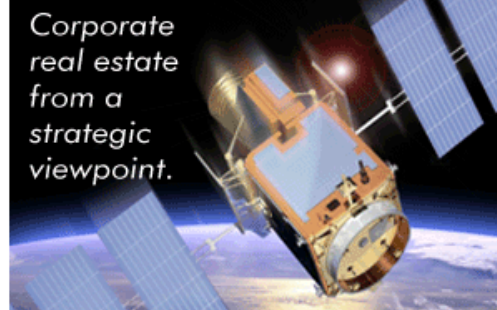
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In business since 1977, Jim Mumford has had plenty of time to figure out what he wants his company to stand for. That said, the past 12 months have gone a long way in defining **Good Earth Plant Co.**

What began as a general flower shop set up by Mumford at the age of 20 is today one of the few places around San Diego that companies and individuals turn to when looking to turn their homes and offices into sustainable green spaces.



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Finding practical ways to put plants in new and interesting places has changed the business model to where Mumford has added a second arm: Greenscaped Buildings.

Green roofs and walls are not an entirely new phenomenon, but they are an increasingly popular one. The new downtown campus of Thomas Jefferson School of Law, with its cycad-adorned lobby, is one of the places to display Mumford's touch.

The building won an Orchid at this year's Orchids & Onions Awards for landscaping, praised for what Mumford brought to it, which includes an 85-foot green wall and what he refers to as an "extremely unique" assortment of planters on the first, fifth and eighth floors.

Because this is San Diego, Mumford focuses his green walls and roofs on drought-tolerant plants, primarily succulents. But he also uses native plants on rooftops and edibles on walls, such as mint, sage, parsley and other herbs.

It wasn't always a part of Mumford's vision, but reaching out and actually making an impact in the green movement is something he embraces, especially after losing his Barona-area house to the 2003 Cedar Fire.

While dealing with the troubles that came with that, Mumford took a step back from the business, hiring a general manager to run the company. In his time away, he explored his life.

Through that exploration, he discovered green roofs.

"I had kind of heard about it just prior to the fire — didn't think a whole lot about it," Mumford said. "But as I started talking to architects about what they knew, I got a response I've never gotten from anything I'd ever had a conversation with an architect about. They stopped and asked questions."

The idea of green roofs resonated with Mumford, who recalls his father being into conservation.

"I could never figure out whether he was more of an environmentalist or cheap," Mumford said with a laugh.

Although not a motivating factor at the beginning of his new venture, the idea of green roofs as a fire retardant is also one that sits well with Mumford.

Circumstances kept Mumford from rebuilding his own home, which he and his family built with sustainability in mind, but he's grateful that the green movement has come to a point where it's not only sustainable in the environmental sense, but also in a sense that sustains his business.

"Because green roofs and green walls are pretty new ... there's really nobody with a lot of experience on it," Mumford said. "We're involved in just about everything going on."