

Clean Air Houseplants

NASA found that certain houseplants reduce the following indoor chemicals, as shown in the table below:

- (B) Benzene: a solvent found in oils and paints
- (F) Formaldehyde: in particle board and foam insulation
- (T) Trichloroethylene: adhesives, paints, varnish and inks
- (X) Xylene and Toluene: plastic, rubber and solvents
- (A) Ammonia: refrigeration, cleaning products

Plant	B	F	T	X	A
Chrysanthemum*	■	■	■	■	■
Gerbera Daisy*	■	■	■		
Heartleaf Philodendron		■			
Elephant Ear Philodendron		■			
Corn Plant	■	■	■		
English Ivy	■	■	■	■	
Spider Plant		■		■	
Janet Craig Dracaena	■	■	■		
Striped or Warneckii Dracaena	■	■	■	■	
Weeping Fig	■	■	■	■	
Golden Pothos	■	■	■	■	
Peace Lily	■	■	■	■	■
Lacy Tree Philodendron		■			
Chinese Evergreen	■	■			
Bamboo Palm	■	■	■	■	
Snake Plant/Mother in Law's Tongue	■	■	■	■	
Red-edged Dracaena	■	■	■	■	

*Typically outdoor plant, will last for months blooming indoors

These plants are easy to maintain and work hard to keep you healthy. Bringing Nature's life support indoors greatly reduces illness caused by these and other toxins used in synthetic materials. NASA also found that plants play a psychological role; sick people actually recover more quickly with plants around.

Just 7 plants in containers 6" or larger significantly improve air quality in 1000 square feet, the size of an average classroom.



Breathe Easy with Houseplants

The How-To and Benefits of Indoor Plants



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Why Have Houseplants?

Houseplants do more than just add aesthetic elements to a space; they actually improve your quality of life.

Health benefits

Plants photosynthesize by absorbing carbon dioxide and releasing oxygen during sunlight hours. Having plants indoors increases daytime oxygen levels. At night, the cycle reverses for most plants, but some, like orchids, bromeliads, succulents and Gerbera daisies, work opposite from their leafy friends; placing them in sleeping areas refreshes air during the nighttime.

As plants transpire, they release water vapor into the air around them. Many plants in an enclosed area can actually increase indoor humidity, greatly helping people with allergies and respiratory illnesses. Increased humidity also decreases dry skin, colds, coughs and sore throats.

Plants also reduce indoor contaminants found in adhesives, paints and other everyday substances found in the home or office. Dust-free foliage enhances their effectiveness. See the back page of this handout for a list of plants that NASA scientists tested and proved remove significant levels of hazardous airborne chemicals.

Psychological benefits

Multiple studies on different continents have documented the amazing effects of having greenery indoors or even visible from indoors. They reduce tension, anxiety, fatigue and depression. Bringing greenery indoors helps generate mental creativity, mood and optimism and brings life to otherwise inanimate spaces.

Design benefits

Plants soften a room, add interest and depth, screen or separate areas and bring the outdoors in. Containers provide sculptural design elements with shape, texture and color. Grouping different types of plants in small clusters at various heights creates a natural effect that evokes feelings of security and relaxation. Indoor plants give us the ability to connect with nature while working or spending time at home.

Culinary benefits

Indoor herbs provide fragrance and reachable, weather-proof harvesting for your favorite recipes.

How to Keep Houseplants Healthy

Proper care of your houseplants will ensure their health and longevity for maximum benefit to you.

Exposure

For the most part, houseplants need bright, indirect light; place your plants near windows. East facing windows can shine morning light directly on plants; those near South facing windows should be out of the sun's direct rays. Avoid putting plants close to West facing windows, especially during warm months when Western walls and windows of buildings take in the most heat.

Water

The amount of water a plant needs depends on the type of plant; succulents will need to be watered less often than indoor tropicals. Because they're typically not in direct sunlight, plants won't dry out as quickly as they may outside. Typically a weekly watering is plenty, though during Winter months when the furnace may be running, more frequent watering (and dusting the foliage) may be necessary. If you tend to be forgetful, decorative self-watering containers take the guesswork away since plants draw the water they need from a reservoir filled every 4 to 6 weeks. In standard containers, the drooping, sad foliage of a thirsty plant will typically remind you to water before all hope is lost.

Fertilizer

Because indoor plants are in containers, it's essential to supply nutrients to the soil as the plant uses them or as they are leached out by watering. Granular formulas like *Osmocote's Outdoor & Indoor Smart Release Plant Food* take care of your plants with only three feedings a year. For an organic option, try *Eleanor's VF-11 Plant food*; apply according to label instructions for indoor use.

Transplanting

Houseplants are typically tropical plants brought indoors, which in nature can reach massive sizes. To keep plants healthy, you may need to transplant to a pot with a 1" to 2" larger diameter every year to few years, depending on the plant. To maintain size, but improve health, remove the plant from its container, selectively prune up to ¼ of the plant's roots and replant into the same container with fresh *SummerWinds Natural and Organic Potting Soil*.