

Air Purifying Houseplants

With information from NASA’s “Interior Landscape Plants for Indoor Air Pollutant Abatement” study.

Houseplants have many beneficial attributions. They improve the air quality in your home, help you sleep, work as natural humidifiers, have been shown to help improve mental health, and add aesthetic beauty to any interior landscape.

In this handout we will take a closer look at air purifying houseplants.

**So, how do houseplants clean the air?**

The answer lies under the soil, where the roots of the plant and microorganisms work to “destroy the pathogenic viruses, bacteria, and the organic chemicals (found in the air), eventually converting all of these air pollutants into new plant tissue.” Alcaligenes, Bacillus, and Curtobacterium are just a few of the microorganisms known to be capable of biodegrading toxic chemicals when activated by plant root growth. These are found in good quality, organic rich soil- which is why choosing a high-quality organic potting soil is just as important as choosing the right plant.

**Which houseplant is right for me?**

There are several factors to consider when choosing your plant. What is your lighting like where you’d like to place it? How much room does it have to grow? Do you have pets or children who might consume part of the plant? How much maintenance are you willing to do?

Typically, low-light houseplants remove toxins at a higher rate than full sun plants. These plants usually have larger and stronger root systems. This doesn’t mean you have to have a shady area to get the benefits of cleaner air, several moderate to high-light plants will also help improve the quality of air in your home.

A few air purifying plants can be found on our “Non-Toxic Houseplant” list. Copies of this list are available at the store or on our website [www.airportgarden.biz](http://www.airportgarden.biz).

**What kinds of toxins are they cleaning from my air?**

Carbon Monoxide, Benzene, Trichloroethylene and Formaldehyde are just a few of the toxins your houseplants will help clean from your air. Several of these can be found in ink, plastics, insulation, paints and more of the products we interact with daily.

(Flip the page for a list of air purifying houseplants.)

**Here are a few air purifying houseplants to consider-**

* **Aloe Vera** Light: Full Sun Size: 2-3 ft. tall, 1-2 ft. wide. Maintenance: Low

Known for its healing properties, aloe is also a great air purifier removing formaldehyde and benzene.

* **Bamboo Palm** Light: Part Sun/Shade Size: 3-20 ft. tall, 1-10 ft. wide. Maintenance: Low

One of the best all around air cleaners. Needs lots of room to grow. Removes formaldehyde especially well.

* **Boston Fern** Light: Bright Indirect Size: Up to 3 ft. tall and wide. Maintenance: Low

The best for removing formaldehyde. Also eliminates heavy metals, such as mercury and arsenic. Great in bathrooms.

* **Chrysanthemum** Light: Full Sun/Bright Size: 1-3 ft. tall, 2-3 ft. wide. Maintenance: Moderate

Rated at the top of NASA’s study. Rids air of benzene, a known cancer-causing toxin, trichloroethylene, formaldehyde and ammonia.

* **Dracaena** Light: Low Size: 4-8 ft. tall, 2-3 ft. wide. Maintenance: Low

Removes formaldehyde. Great all around air cleaner. Upward growth makes it ideal for small spaces.

* **English Ivy** Light: Low/Shade Size: Varies with pruning. Maintenance: Low to moderate

Idea for people with asthma and allergies. Removes benzene and formaldehyde. Fast grower!

* **Ficus** Light: Bright Indirect Size: Varies by variety. Maintenance: Low

All around air purifier. Does not respond well to being overwatered. People with latex allergies may react to this plant.

* **Gerber Daisy** Light: Bright Size: Less than 1’ tall and wide. Maintenance: Moderate

Fantastic at removing benzene. Absorbs carbon dioxide and gives off oxygen overnight to help improve sleep.

* **Pathos** Light: Bright Indirect Size: Varies by variety and pruning. Maintenance: Low

NASA placed in top 3 for removing formaldehyde. Removes carbon monoxide and increases general air quality.

* **Peace Lily** Light: Bright Indirect Size: 18-24” tall and wide. Maintenance: Low

Removes benzene, trichloroethylene, alcohols, acetone, formaldehyde and mold from the air. Loves water!

* **Philodendron** Light: Low to indirect. Size: Varies by variety. Maintenance: Low to moderate

One of the best for removing formaldehyde at high concentrations. Poisonous to people and pets.

* **Snake Plant** Light: Low Size: Varies by variety. Maintenance: Very low

Removes at least 107 known air pollutants. Also produces copious amounts of oxygen throughout the night, making it an excellent plant to keep in the bedroom.

* **Spider Plant** Light: Bright Indirect Size: Varies by variety and pruning. Maintenance: Very low

Battles benzene, formaldehyde, carbon monoxide and xylene, a solvent used in the leather, rubber and printing industries.