

The 10 Best Pollution-Busting Houseplants

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Over the years there has been quite a bit of debate about whether houseplants really can filter indoor air by removing toxins and particles. NASA tests in a spacecraft packed with plants showed markedly better air, but proving that plants are efficient filters in other situations hasn't been so easy.

But houseplants can't hurt. Not only might they take out some of the air pollution, but some think they may offer some protection against electromagnetic radiation.

But which houseplants should you pick?

The New Ecologist made a list of the top 10 anti-pollutant houseplants. They rate the best as:

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|-------------------------|--------------------|
| 1.The Feston Rose plant | 6.African Violets |
| 2.Devil's Ivy | 7.Christmas Cactus |
| 3.Phalaenopsis | 8.Yellow Goddess |
| 4.English Ivy | 9.Garlic Vine |
| 5.Parlor Ivy | 10.Peace Lily |

Sources:

» [The Daily Green September 30, 2009](#)

» [The New Ecologist July 2009](#)

Dr. Mercola's Comments:

Bringing a bit of nature indoors with houseplants is an excellent idea, both for your physical and emotional health. Living closer to nature can actually [help you to live longer](#), and hospital patients who have a view of nature recover from illness and surgery more quickly than those who don't.

It was NASA, along with the Associated Landscape Contractors of America (ALCA), that conducted the classic study on the benefits of plants on indoor air, and they reported that houseplants were able to remove up to 87 percent of air toxins in 24 hours. They recommended using 15 to 18 "good-sized" houseplants in 6- to 8-inch diameter containers for an 1,800 square-foot house.

[NASA at Stennis Space Center has also constructed a BioHome](#) that uses bioregenerative technology with the ultimate goal of providing a life support system for permanent human habitation of space. And inside the structure are common houseplants, which NASA says “serve as living air purifiers” to “absorb chemical pollutants resulting from synthetic materials in the living area.”

If houseplants are capable of cleansing air in the BioHome, imagine what they can do in your home!

Why Should You be Concerned About Your Indoor Air Quality?

NASA has concerns about indoor air quality for obvious reasons, but you and your family also have reason to seek to improve the quality of your home and office air.

Sure, walking into an office building or typical home will probably not make you immediately sick, but over time your body will absorb any number of potentially toxic substances that exist freely in the air. For instance:

- [Volatile organic compounds \(VOCs\)](#), which are toxic gases emitted from paints, cleansers, air fresheners, vinyl floors, carpets, upholstery fabrics, and much more, can cause cancer and damage to your liver, kidney and central nervous system.

VOCs in the indoor air of new buildings have been found to average 20 to 40 mg per m³. Adverse health effects may begin with exposure at just 10 mg per m³.

- Engineered wood products commonly used to make cabinets, furniture, wall paneling and more emit pollutants such as formaldehyde into your home's air.

Indoor air can be up to 10 times more polluted than outdoor air, and some other potential toxic vapors that can contaminate it, aside from those listed above, include:

- Benzene
- Xylene
- Toluene
- Ammonia

While a high-quality air purifier can be used to help reduce toxins in your home and office air, and I highly recommend using one at that, houseplants can act as an extra buffer against air pollutants - and they have benefits that extend beyond air quality as well!

House Plants are Good for Your Health and Well-Being

It really is amazing how large an impact a few potted plants can have. Here are just some of the benefits that houseplants can bring to your life:

- A study by researchers from the Agricultural University of Norway found potted plants [reduced stress in office workers](#) and lowered the number of sick days taken.
- Research from TNO Quality of Life found plants in the workplace [lessened fatigue and stress](#), and employees noted a reduction in flu-like symptoms. Employees also reported feeling more productive with plants nearby. As a result of the findings TNO recommends providing one large plant for every two employees!
- Research carried out at The Royal College of Agriculture in Cirencester found students were [more attentive and more likely to return to class](#) if there were plants in the lecture hall.
- A University of Agriculture in Norway study found indoor plants can reduce fatigue, coughs, sore throats and other cold-related illnesses, partially by increasing humidity levels and decreasing dust.

Adding a few houseplants to your home and office is truly a simple way to bring more natural, aesthetically pleasing and healthy materials into your living space.

If you'd like a few ideas to get you started, [How to Grow Fresh Air: 50 House Plants that Purify Your Home or Office](#) is a great reference. Just remember that some houseplants are poisonous, so do your homework before buying -- especially if you have children or pets in your home.

Related Links:

- » [Plants are Good for Your Health: Four Ways to Use Them to Your Advantage](#)
- » [How Your House and Office Makes or Breaks Your Health](#)
- » [Living Close to Nature May Help You Live Longer](#)

Reference website: <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2009/10/20/The-10-Best-PollutionBusting-Houseplants.aspx>