
Subject: Houseplants For Purifying Air

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Types of Houseplants To Clean Indoor Air

19 Houseplants That Clean the Air, from sustainablebabysteps.com

Much of the research on these beneficial houseplants has been done by NASA scientists researching ways to create suitable space station habitats. All indoors plants (flowering or not) are able to purify indoor air to some degree through their normal photosynthesis processes. But some were found to be more beneficial than others in removing harmful household toxins, even removing 90% of chemicals in the air in only twenty-four hours!

The three main household toxins of concern are:

- benzene
- formaldehyde
- trichloroethylene

These carcinogenic chemicals are used in the manufacturing of synthetic substances and materials and are off-gassed from new materials for some time (up to several years, depending on the material of product in question). Benzene can also be emitted from gas ranges during use, making some types of houseplants below great for use in the kitchen.

This means these types of houseplants may just decrease your risk of cancers, asthma, allergies, auto-immune disorders and other diseases.

Tips for Choosing and Caring for Your Plants

Below you'll find the common name and botanical name of each plant, its benefit to you and your home and a few ideas of the type of care it needs.

Along with a corresponding photo and the following tips, you can decide which plant is best for your home.

Choose one 10- to 12-inch potted plant per 100 square foot of your home for the most effective air purification.

Cross-reference several care guides to check for the most accurate and up-to-date information.

Because common names can vary, be sure to cross-reference the botanical name of any plant you get to ensure it will do the job you need it to do.

Consider where you might place your plants and the amount of sun they will receive to ensure your plant will thrive in that area.

Make note of the water needed and write it on a calendar so that you can keep the watering schedules balanced.

Periodically dust the leaves of each plant with a damp cloth to ensure proper absorption of air particles and toxins.

Keep their soil replenished with rich compost or compost tea. Avoid non-organic or synthetic

fertilizers.

Whenever possible, capture rainwater for your plants. All types of houseplants thrive best with natural sources of water.

IMPORTANT: Please note that these houseplants are good for purifying air, but that doesn't mean they are safe for pets or kids who like to put things in their mouth. Check out this list for more details, read the descriptions of each plant, and do some research on any plant you bring into your home.

Common Name: Aloe Vera
Botanical Name: *Aloe barbadensis*

Benefits: Not only can it be used for burns on the skin, it is also known to remove formaldehyde from the air.

Notes: Needs well-drained soil with slight drying between waterings, full sun is best with protection from high heats. Although largely known for its healing properties, it is considered to be an irritant to some.

Common Name: Areca Palm
Botanical Name: *Chrysalidocarpus lutescens*

Benefits: General air purifier, especially as it grows larger. It's known for being one of the better performers in purifying the air.

Notes: Moderately drought tolerant and prefers partial sun and well-drained soil.

Common Name: Baby Rubber Plant
Botanical Name: *Peperomia obtusifolia* or *Ficus robusta*

Benefits: These houseplants clean the air by emitting high oxygen content, and purifies indoor air by removing chemicals, such as formaldehyde or other toxins.

Notes: Likes filtered light, infrequent watering and rich soil. I've found conflicting information as to whether or not this plant contains any poisonous parts.

Common Name: Bamboo Palm or Reed Palm
Botanical Name: *Chamaedorea seifrizii*

Benefits: According to NASA, it removes formaldehyde and is also said to act as a natural humidifier.

Notes: Likes bright, indirect light and prefers to remain moist but not too much and doesn't like sitting in water.

Common Name: Boston Fern
Botanical Name: *Nephrolepis exaltata Bostoniensis*

Benefits: Said to act as a natural air humidifier, removes formaldehyde and is a general air purifier. Said to be among the best in air purifying houseplants.

Notes: Likes bright light and damp soil but can be tolerant of drought or partial light.

Common Name: Chinese Evergreen
Botanical Name: *Aglaonema* sp.

Benefits: Emits high oxygen content, and purifies indoor air by removing chemicals, such as formaldehyde, benzene or other toxins.

Notes: Does well with full shade and good draining; variegated plants need more sunlight. The sap of this plant is considered poisonous and is an irritant.

Common Name: Corn Cane or Mass Cane
Botanical Name: *Dracaena massangeana* or *dracaena fragrans Massangeana*

Benefits: Known for removing formaldehyde and known generally as one of the houseplants that clean the air.

Notes: Does great with low light and low water.

Common Name: Dwarf/Pygmy Date Palm
Botanical Name: *Phoenix roebelenii*

Benefits: Said to remove formaldehyde and xylene (a chemical found in plastics and solvents) from the air.

Notes: Loves lots of sun, moist soil and warm water.

Common Name: English Ivy
Botanical Name: *Hedera helix*

Benefits: It's known for removing the chemical benzene, a known carcinogen found in cigarette smoke, detergents, pesticides, and the off-gassing of other synthetic materials, is said to be fantastic for asthma and allergies and also removes formaldehyde.

Notes: Can be invasive, making it great for a potted plant.

Common Name: Ficus alii
Botanical Name: Ficus maeleilandii alii

Benefits: Said to be a great overall air purifier.

Notes: These types of houseplants love indirect sunlight; be careful not to overwater. Those with allergies to latex may react to this plant!

Common Name: Gerbera Daisy
Botanical Name: Gerbera sp. or Gerbera jamesonii

Benefits: NASA says this plant is fantastic at removing benzene, a known cancer-causing chemical. It also absorbs carbon dioxide and gives off oxygen overnight, which is said to improve your sleep!

Notes: Likes bright light

Common Name: Golden Pothos
Botanical Name: Epipremnum aureum syn. Scindapsus aureus

Benefits: NASA places this plant among the top 3 types of houseplants great for removing formaldehyde. Also known for removing carbon monoxide and increasing general indoor air quality.

Notes: Needs less water in colder temps and partial sun.

Common Name: Janet Craig
Botanical Name: Draecana deremensis

Benefits: Said to be a good overall air purifier, removing most air pollutants.

Notes: Prefers indirect sunlight, and watering without fertilizers.

Common Name: Kimberly Queen Fern
Botanical Name: Nephrolepis oblitterata

Benefits: These types of houseplants clean formaldehyde, toluene, and xylene out of your home.

Notes: Prefers bright but indirect sunlight, with dry soil between waterings (but not dry for too long).

Common Name: Lady Palm (plus 10+ varieties)
Botanical Name: Rhapis Excelsa

Benefits: These types of houseplants are said to be a good overall air purifier, removing most air pollutants.

Notes: Prefers partial sun all day and shade in the winter, with more frequent water in hotter months, but never allow to sit in water or be overwatered.

Common Name: Marginata or Dragon tree

Botanical Name: *Dracaena marginata*

Benefits: Known for purifying the air of the carcinogen, benzene, commonly found in the off-gasing of synthetic materials, cigarette smoke and other household chemicals. Also known for removing formaldehyde, xylene (found in varnishes, paints and paint thinners) and trichloroethylene (found in solvents) from the air.

Notes: It requires little attention, tolerates dry soil and irregular watering and prefers no direct sunlight. It is, however, susceptible to fluoride toxicity (so fluoridated water sources may need to be avoided).

Common Name: Moth Orchid

Botanical Name: *Phalaenopsis*

Benefits: Said to remove VOCs (volatile organic compounds) and formaldehyde commonly off-gased from paints, solvents and other synthetic materials.

Notes: Thrives in high humidity, lots of light (but not hot, mid-day sun) and thorough waterings with, unlike many types of houseplants, almost complete drying out between.

Common Name: Mums

Botanical Name: *Chrysanthemum* sp. or *Chrysanthemum morifolium*

Benefits: Very effective at removing benzene, a carcinogen (cancer-causing substance) associated with most chemicals, plastics, cigarettes and off-gasing. Also removes trichloroethylene (found in solvents and cleaners), formaldehyde and ammonia.

Notes: Likes partial sun, and lots of water. Although they're among the houseplants that clean the air, they only flower once and are generally annual plants, especially when planted outdoors.

Common Name: Peace Lily

Botanical Name: *Spathiphyllum* sp.

Benefits: Known for removing benzene, a common household chemical and known carcinogen. It's also said to remove mold spores in the air, making it great for bathrooms, kitchens and laundry rooms; purifying the air of trichloroethylene, a chemical found in cleaners and solvents; and

removing alcohols, acetone, and formaldehyde.

Notes: Easy to care for, it prefers lots of water, less often and bright, indirect light.

Common Name: Philodendron

Botanical Name: *P. cordatum*, *P. scandens* or *P. selloum*

Benefits: Also noted by NASA among the best types of houseplants for removing formaldehyde, especially higher concentrations.

Notes: Philodendrons are considered poisonous, so keep out of the reach of children and pets.

Common Name: Snake Plant

Botanical Name: *Sansevieria trifasciata*

Benefits: Found by NASA to absorb toxins, such as nitrogen oxides and formaldehyde.

Notes: It tolerates low light levels and irregular watering (and needs only a few waterings throughout winter).

Common Name: Schefflera, or Umbrella Tree

Botanical Name: *Brassaia actinophylla*

Benefits: Said to remove benzene (a carcinogenic substance) from the air.

Notes: Can be toxic to pets and children. Prefers bright but indirect sun and lots of water and humidity.

Common Name: Spider Plant

Botanical Name: *Chlorophytum comosum*

Benefits: NASA places this plant among the top 3 types of houseplants that are great at removing formaldehyde. Also removes carbon monoxide and other toxins or impurities.

Notes: Likes bright, indirect light and lots of water while growing.

Common Name: Warneckii or *Dracaena warneckei*

Botanical Name: *Dracaena deremensis* or *Dracaena deremensis warneckei*

Benefits: Known for removing trichloroethylene, a chemical found in many solvents, dry cleaning solutions and refrigerants. Also said to remove benzene, a carcinogene.

Notes: Moderate sun and water needs, but, like most types of houseplants, dislikes sitting in

water. Avoid fluoridated water sources.

Common Name: Weeping Fig or Ficus Tree

Botanical Name: Ficus benjamina

Benefits: Known to remove common airborne toxins and increase oxygen levels.

Notes: Prefers bright light and sun, but is also shade-tolerant. Moderate water needs for these types of houseplants.
