

Houseplants Help Clean Indoor Air

Many common houseplants help fight pollution indoors. They are able to scrub significant amounts of harmful gases out of the air, through the everyday process of photosynthesis. Not only do plants absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen into the air, but they can absorb other gases like benzene, formaldehyde and trichlorethylene, rendering them harmless in the soil.

This is good news for buildings where the air feels stale and circulation seems poor. Even in new energy efficient buildings, the amount of insulation in the construction can serve to trap pollutants indoors, resulting in 'sick building syndrome'. The liberal use of houseplants is an easy way to make a dent in the problem.

There are many studies on indoor plants that are efficient air cleaners. NASA has studied houseplants for use on future space stations and their studies recommend that you use 15-18 good sized houseplants in 6-8 inch diameter containers to improve the air quality in an average 1,800 square foot house. The more vigorously they grow, the better job they'll do for you.

Some of the most efficient plants NASA tested are the following list:

- ❖ English ivy (*Hedera helix*)
- ❖ Spider plant (*Cholorophytum comosum*)
- ❖ Golden pothos (*Epipremnum aureum*)
- ❖ Chinese evergreen (*Aglaonema modestum*)
- ❖ Bamboo or reed palm (*Chamaedorea sefritzii*)
- ❖ Snake plant (*Sansevieria trifasciata*)
- ❖ Heartleaf philodendron (*Philodendron scandens 'oxycardium'*)
- ❖ Selloum philodendron (*Philodendron selloum*)
- ❖ Elephant ear philodendron (*Philodendron domesticum*)
- ❖ Red-edged dracaena (*Dracaena marginata*)
- ❖ Cornstalk dracaena (*Dracaena fragrans 'massangeana'*)
- ❖ Janet Craig dracaena (*Dracaena deremensis 'Janet Craig'*)
- ❖ Warneck dracaena (*Dracaena deremensis 'Warneckii'*)
- ❖ Weeping fig (*Fucus benjamina*)

