Houseplants are a wonderful way to beautify and cheer up your indoor spaces, but the fact that they are exceptional air purifiers is often overlooked. Houseplants improve air quality by absorbing toxins along with carbon dioxide. Within their leaves, microorganisms break down the chemicals naturally. The plants then release fresh, clean oxygen for us to breathe.

Studies have been done to measure the amount of pollutants filtered out by common houseplants. In some studies the plants were able to remove up to 80% of the pollutants! Some research even showed that not only were the leaves doing the work, but the roots also helped in the process.

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We all know how important it is to help clean and maintain air quality outside; but many people don’t realize that indoor air pollution is one of the fastest growing environmental problems we face today. The alarming fact is that electrical equipment, furniture, cleaning products and building materials all release trace amounts of toxins such as carbon monoxide, formaldehyde and benzene (a known carcinogen), into our homes and offices.

**Common Pollutants and their Sources**

**FORMALDEHYDE:**
Carpeting, pressed wood, foam insulation, fiberwood products (such as paneling), hair sprays, wax paper, paper towels and various cleaning products.

**BENZENE:**
Glue, Spot removers, oils, paint, inks, varnish, rubber, plastic products, detergents, dyes, gasoline and paint stripper.

**HYDROCARBONS:**
Vinyl products (such as furniture and flooring), detergents and fabric softeners.

**TRICHLOROETHYLENE:**
Inks, paint, lacquer, varnishes, adhesives (such as rubber cement, epoxy or spray mount).

**METHYLENE CHLORIDE:**
Paint strippers, refinishers and many aerosol products.

One study conducted by NASA suggests using one houseplant per 100 square feet of floor space for the most effective pollution control.
LIST OF SUGGESTED HOUSEPLANTS

Aglaonema commutatum  CHINESE EVERGREEN
Aloe vera
Araucaria heterophylla  NORFOLK ISLAND PINE
Asplenium viviparum  MOTHER FERN
Chamaedorea elegans  PARLOR PALM
Chlorophytum comosum  SPIDER PLANT
Chrysalidocarpus lutescens  ARECA PALM
Codiaeum variegatum  CROTON
Ctenanthe oppenheimiana  NEVER-NEVER PLANT
Dieffenbachia seguine  DUMB CANE
Dracaena spp.  CORN PLANT, DRAGON TREE, JANET CRAIG
Epipremnum aureum  GOLDEN POTHOS
Ficus benjamina  WEEPING FIG
Ficus elastica  RUBBER TREE
Howea forsteriana  KENTIA PALM
Monstera deliciosa  SWISS CHEESE PLANT, SPLIT-LEAF PHILODENDRON
Musa acuminate  DWARF BANANA
Nephrolepis e. ‘bostoniensis’  BOSTON FERN
Orchid Phalaenopsis, Dendrobium
Pepperomia spp.
Philodendron bipinnatifidum  TREE PHILODENDRON
Philodendron cordatum  HEART-LEAF PHILODENDRON
Pothos spp.  DEVIL’S IVY
Radermachera sinica  CHINA DOLL
Sansevieria trifasciata  SNAKE PLANT, MOTHER-IN-LAW TONGUE
Schefflera spp.
Spathiphyllum spp.  PEACE LILY

GROWTH REQUIREMENTS

Keep in mind that different houseplants have different needs. Variables such as light, humidity, water, and plant size are all important considerations when choosing houseplants. Please refer to care instructions or ask an employee for assistance when selecting the right air-cleansing houseplant for your home or office. We’re here to help!

REFERENCES:
HOW TO GROW FRESH AIR: 50 HOUSE PLANTS THAT PURIFY YOUR HOME OR OFFICE by B.C. WOLVERTON