

Houseplants: Living Air Filters

The following is a report from *Plants for Clean Air Council*, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to communicating the environmental benefits of plants in our living spaces.

Did you know that cultivating indoor plants may lower the risk of asthma, allergies and “sick building” syndrome.

The EPA cites indoor air pollution as one of the top five public health threats in America, and the main culprit in the 60 percent rise in asthma over the last decade.

Now researchers are looking to houseplants for a solution to polluted indoor air.

The findings of a two year study by the NASA indicate that plants provide a natural, cost-effective way to clean indoor air and combat “sick building” syndrome.

The study focused on three of the most common indoor air pollutants: formaldehyde, benzene, and trichloroethylene. These and other common indoor air pollutants, such as asbestos, radon, lead and carbon monoxide, are often emitted from furnishings, office equipment and building materials.

In the study, philodendron, spider plant and golden pothos most effectively removed formaldehyde from the air. Gerber daisies and chrysanthemums best removed benzene. Many other plants also removed toxic chemicals from the air, including bamboo palm, peace lily, corn plant, mother-in-laws tongue and English ivy.

Researcher, Dr. Bill Wolverton, said, “This study demonstrates that plants are a natural solution in indoor air pollution—not just in future NASA space ships but in the offices and homes of today.”