

Plants breathe life into indoor spaces



WES DUREN
Marvin's Organic Gardens



Energy conservation is on everyone's lips, and rightfully so. We are keeping our homes and offices more tightly

insulated to conserve energy and save money. At the same time, we are inadvertently trapping hundreds of toxic substances inside and keeping the fresh air out.

The Environmental Protection Agency ranks indoor air pollution as one of the top five threats to public health. There is an easy and attractive solution that doesn't jeopardize energy efficiency: Just add houseplants.

In nature, plants act as the lungs

for our earth, producing oxygen and removing gases, such as carbon dioxide and nitrogen oxide, from the atmosphere.

The ability of houseplants to improve the quality of air we breathe is accepted scientific fact. With a little loving care, anyone can enjoy the air quality and aesthetic beauty that only living plants can provide.

Many plants are low-maintenance air purifiers. Here are some

of our favorites:

BAMBOO PALM

It has rich fan-shaped foliage that is insect resistant, and it's known to remove toxins like benzene, formaldehyde and carbon monoxide from the air and add moisture to an indoor environment.

GERBERA DAISY

Blooms come in a variety of colors, are excellent as cut flowers, and continue to bloom year-round if kept in part- to full-sun conditions. It's also excellent at removing chemical vapors from the air.

JANET CRAIG DRACAENA

Easy to grow, this attractive houseplant bears rosettes of dark-green foliage and rates among the best at removing chemical toxins, like trichloroethylene, from indoor environments.

SNAKE PLANT

(Mother-in-Law's Tongue): Virtually indestructible, it provides solid vertical interest for those with limited space.

ENGLISH IVY

This vigorous climber works well in hanging baskets or topiaries. It comes in a range of shapes and colors and is rated highly at removing formaldehyde from the air.

TRICOLOR DRAGON TREE DRACAENA

Resistant to insect attacks, this is easy to grow. Its palm-like foliage evokes a tropical feeling, and it is among the best at removing xylene and trichloroethylene from indoor environments.

Houseplants are killed by kindness more than by any other technique. Most houseplants prefer evenly moist soil, but not soggy. Most houseplants should be watered only when the top of the soil is dry to the touch. Mist foliage often, or wipe with a wet cloth to reduce foliage damage. Water and fertilize less often in the wintertime when growth is slowed, and more often during active growth periods.

For maximum benefit, place houseplants 6 to 8 feet from where you spend the majority of your time — such as near your desk, kitchen table or sleeping area. Not only do houseplants add aesthetic and psychological value, but they help add oxygen and clean the air we breathe.

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