



# Clean Air Plants

For centuries people have brought plants indoors to decorate their homes. There's just something about the lush, living greenness that comforts and soothes the soul. Now there is scientific evidence to corroborate that feeling.

In 1989 a study was conducted by NASA to find what effects plants have on air quality. Over a period of two years they tested 19 common houseplants on their ability to remove chemicals from the air. The chemicals tested were formaldehyde, benzene, and trichloroethylene. These chemicals were selected because of their prevalence in the home environment and their potential negative impact on our health. Results of this study indicated that **all the plants tested did improve air quality**, although some plants were better than others at eliminating a specific chemical.

**Golden pothos, spider plants,** and heartleaf **philodendron** performed best for **formaldehyde** removal. Formaldehyde is found in cigarette smoke, kerosene, natural gases used for cooking and heating, and is also found in many building and cleaning materials. **Benzene** was best removed by the flowering plants, **gerbera daisies** and **chrysanthemums**. **Snake plant, English ivy, peace lilies, and bamboo palm** were also very effective at benzene removal. Benzene is a common solvent found in oils and paints. **Gerbera daisies, peace lilies, and bamboo palm** were also the most effective at removal of **trichloroethylene**, a chemical found in paints, varnishes, inks, and adhesives.

*Here is a list of all the plants tested and their indoor light requirements:*

LOW to MEDIUM LIGHT

- Aglaonema (Chinese evergreen)
- Chamaedorea sefritzii (bamboo palm)
- Chlorophytum (spider plant)
- Dracaena 'Massangeana' (corn plant)
- Dracaena 'Janet Craig'
- Dracaena 'Warneckii'
- Dracaena marginata
- Philodendron selloum
- Philodendron scandens (heartleaf)
- Pothos
- Sansevieria (snake plant)
- Spathiphyllum (peace lily)

MEDIUM LIGHT

- Ficus benjamina (weeping fig)
- Ficus elastica (rubber tree)
- Hedera helix (English ivy)
- Nephrolepis (boston fern)

BRIGHT LIGHT

- Areca palm
- Chrysanthemum (pot mum)
- Gerbera daisy

I think that it's safe to say that most living plants have the ability to clean the air, and at the very least, make us feel healthier and happier.

