

Air Purifying Houseplants

The three harmful pollutants commonly found in today's home are benzene, formaldehyde and trichloroethylene. Here's the lowdown on these pollutants and the plants that combat them:

Benzene:

Benzene is a commonly-used solvent and is found in tobacco smoke, gasoline, inks, oils, paint, plastic, and rubber. It's also used in the manufacture of detergents, pharmaceuticals, and dyes. Exposure to benzene can cause dizziness, nervousness, headaches, and anemia; and it irritates both the eyes and skin.

Plants that remove benzene are: Gerbera Daisy, Chrysanthemum, Spathiphyllum (Peace Lily), Chamaedorea sefritzii (Bamboo Palm), Dracaena 'Warneckii', Hedera helix (English ivy), and Sansevieria (Snake Plant).

Formaldehyde:

Formaldehyde is found in virtually in all indoor environments. Major sources include insulation, particleboard, and paper products. Many cleaning products also contain formaldehyde. Formaldehyde irritates the mucous membranes of the upper respiratory system and can increase risk of asthma.

Plants that remove formaldehyde are: Chamaedorea sefritzii (Bamboo Palm), Dracaena 'Janet Craig', Sansevieria (Snake Plant), Dracaena Marginata, Spathiphyllum (Peace Lily), Chlorophytum (Spider Plant), Epipremnum aureum (Golden Pothos), and Philodendron scandens 'oxycardium' (Heartleaf Philodendron).

Trichloroethylene (TCE):

Trichloroethylene has a wide variety of industrial uses. It is used in inks, paints, varnishes, and adhesives.

Plants that remove trichloroethylene are: Gerbera daisy, Chrysanthemum, Dracaena Marginata, Spathiphyllum (Peace Lily), Dracaena 'Janet Craig', and Chamaedorea (Bamboo Palm).

Purifying Plants

Most of the plants listed below evolved in tropical or sub-tropical forests, where they received only light filtered through the taller trees. Over time these air-cleaning plants adapted to lower light conditions, so most of them are perfectly suited to the light conditions we can offer them in our homes.

- Aglaonema modestum (Chinese evergreen)
- Chamaedorea sefritzii (Bamboo Palm)
- Chrysanthemum
- Chlorophytum comosum (Spider Plant)
- Dracaena 'Janet Craig' (Corn Plant), Dracaena 'Warneckii' (Striped Dracaena)
- Dracaena marginata (Red-edged Dracaena)
- Epipremnum aureum (Golden Pothos)
- Gerbera Daisy
- Hedera helix (English Ivy)
- Philodendron scandens 'oxycardium' (Heartleaf Philodendron)
- Sansevieria trifasciata (Snake Plant)
- Spathiphyllum (Peace Lily)