

## **Houseplants**

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As the hot weather settles in, we find ourselves cocooning in our homes with the doors and windows tightly closed. When we do this, we trap poisonous gasses from building materials and furnishings inside our homes. This leads to indoor air pollution, which can cause respiratory problems, headaches, eye, nose and throat irritations, fatigue and more.

Along with changing air filters every month, providing good ventilation and letting certain types of furnishings, carpeting and paint to "off-gas" before installation can help curb indoor air pollution. Houseplants also offer an environmentally sound solution to cleaning up your indoor air -- similar to the way Mother Nature naturally cleans up our outdoor atmosphere.

NASA and other government agencies have shown time and again that plants and their root systems absorb poisonous gasses and convert them into sources of food and energy. Along with the plant and the roots absorbing the toxic gasses, the soil also contains millions of microbes that help absorb gasses -- all the more reason to feed your plants with organic fertilizers.

Certain types of plants are more efficient at cleaning up indoor air than others. For instance, palm trees absorb a wide assortment of toxic gasses. I like bamboo palm, lady palm and areca palm. Palm trees can be a little finicky, but they're well worth having as houseplants.

Remember: Palm trees like to be a little on the damp side during active growth.

Tip: When arranging plants in your house, group them according to their light requirements.

Most houseplants have been proven to clean indoor air pollution and increase a home's humidity level, which is often low in our air-conditioned spaces.