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10 Air Purifying Plants for Your Home

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Can household plants function as air purifiers? They can, according to an influential [1989 study published by NASA](#), which found that plants in a closed system could remove volatile organic compounds from the air. [More recent research](#) has shown that this study, while often cited, may overstate the effect that plants can have on air quality. In a real-world setting, plants remove VOCs at a lower rate than an average building's air exchange system. It would require between 10 and 1,000 plants per square meter to have a discernible impact on air quality.

Despite these findings, there are plenty of other reasons to expand your plant library. Here are 10 plants listed in NASA's study that may improve the air quality in your home.

Warning

Some of the plants on this list are toxic to pets. For more information about the safety of specific plants, consult the ASPCA's [searchable database](#).

Peace Lily (*Spathiphyllum wallisii*)



If any plant can purify the air, the peace lily is the most likely candidate. This plant topped NASA's list in terms of the amount of VOCs removed.

As a houseplant, the peace lily is known for being easy to grow and a great choice for novice gardeners. It has long, white flowers and can reach up to three feet in size. It prefers partial sunlight or shady corners rather than direct sunlight. If its leaves turn pale or begin to curl, it may be receiving too much sunlight. A tropical native, the peace lily does prefer high humidity, though it also will grow in average conditions.

Plant Care Tips

- **Light:** Filtered light; generally prefers shade or partial light.
- **Water:** When soil is dry; roughly once a week.
- **Soil:** Rich, loose potting soil with organic material.
- **Pet Safety:** Toxic to cats and dogs.

Spider Plant (Chlorophytum comosum)



In addition to NASA's research, other studies have shown that spider plants can remove particulate matter like dust and ash at a higher rate than other surfaces in a house.

Placed near a fireplace, for example, soot particles otherwise end up elsewhere in the room.

Spider plants are also easy to grow, tolerating low light and infrequent watering. They can be propagated easily as well, by cutting off one of the "spiderettes" that grow out from the main plant. These can then be transplanted into other pots to grow by themselves.

Plant Care Tips

- **Light:** Bright, indirect sunlight.
- **Water:** When soil is dry; this is usually infrequently.
- **Soil:** Well-drained, standard potting mix.
- **Pet Safety:** Nontoxic to cats and dogs.

Snake Plant (*Sansevieria trifasciata*)



The snake plant is a striking succulent that's native to tropical West Africa. It's also regarded as one of the easiest houseplants to care for, and a perfect choice for novice gardeners. While it prefers bright light, it can stand partial shade and doesn't require specific humidity levels. Snake plants can thrive in any part of the house. A member of the succulent family, it stores water in its thick leaves, and would rather be neglected than overwatered.

Plant Care Tips

- **Light:** Medium, indirect light; tolerates sun and shade.
- **Water:** Water regularly, allowing soil to dry well before re-watering.
- **Soil:** Rich, well-draining potting mix.
- **Pet Safety:** Toxic to cats and dogs.

Golden Pothos (Epipremnum aureum)



The golden pothos is a vining plant that will thrive in most indoor spaces, including in locations without much natural light. This forgiving houseplant grows quickly, sometimes up to a foot in a single month. As a vine, it grows long, rather than tall, and its heart-shaped leaves can be trained onto shelves, or allowed to fall naturally. They don't like to be overwatered, which can cause [root rot](#).

Plant Care Tips

- **Light:** Bright, indirect light; can tolerate partial shade or artificial light.
- **Water:** Allow to dry completely between watering; water thoroughly if leaves droop.
- **Soil:** Ordinary potting mix that drains well.
- **Pet Safety:** Toxic to cats and dogs.

Dragon Tree (*Dracaena marginata*)



The dragon tree can tolerate a variety of conditions, from drought to high humidity. It's a great choice in a bathroom or other location with steamy air. Though nurseries and garden centers have small specimens that will fit in any corner of the house, the dragon tree can grow up to six feet tall when it reaches maturity. Thanks to its tolerant nature, it's seen as an indestructible houseplant that can survive even the most inattentive owners.

Plant Care Tips

- **Light:** Low to medium indirect light, filtered sun.
- **Water:** Keep soil moist but not soggy.
- **Soil:** Rich, well draining.
- **Pet Safety:** Toxic to cats and dogs.

Weeping Fig (Ficus benjamina)



The weeping fig is a small tree that can reach three to six feet when grown indoors. It's a native of Asia and Australia, with waxy, bright green leaves that tend to droop even when it's perfectly healthy. Figs value consistency in their care, and can **drop leaves when stressed or moved to a new location**. Caring for a ficus can be tricky, but once you get the watering and light conditions right, they will last a long time.

Plant Care Tips

- **Light:** Bright, indirect light. Tolerates some shade.
- **Water:** Keep soil lightly moist with consistent watering schedule.
- **Soil:** Well-draining, high-quality potting soil.
- **Pet Safety:** Toxic to cats and dogs.

Chinese Evergreen (*Aglaonema commutatum*)



The Chinese evergreen is an attractive species with colorful, variegated foliage. This hardy houseplant tolerates low light and mild drought, up to and including artificial light environments and monthly watering. For best growth, though, it prefers partial sunlight and weekly care. As a tropical native, it likes high humidity. If the leaves are turning brown, try misting the plant on occasion.

Plant Care Tips

- **Light:** Indirect light, partial shade; can tolerate fluorescent lighting.
- **Water:** Prefers regular watering, tolerates mild drought.
- **Soil:** Rich, fertile potting mix with peat moss.
- **Pet Safety:** Toxic to cats and dogs.

English Ivy (Hedera helix)



English ivy is a popular vining species of houseplant that grows easily in a variety of conditions. It prefers moist, shady conditions, and can even thrive in a [bathroom](#). It's a good choice for a hanging plant, due to its tendency to droop and grow longer rather than taller. If you find that you like the look of English ivy, it's easily propagated by cutting, making it easy to multiply around the house. It's also an aggressive [invasive](#) species in the United States, and shouldn't be grown outdoors or tossed in a compost pile.

Plant Care Tips

- **Light:** Indirect light to mostly shade.
- **Water:** Keep soil moist but ensure drainage. Spritz with a mister.
- **Soil:** Regular, well-draining potting mix.
- **Pet Safety:** Toxic to cats and dogs.

Heart-Leaf Philodendron (*Philodendron hederaceum*)



The heart-leaf philodendron is a low-maintenance plant with glossy, heart-shaped leaves that can thrive with [little attention](#). This trailing plant can be trained to climb up a screen, trellis, or pole, or just be allowed to drape from its container. Native to South America, it's tolerant of drier conditions, but it will thrive if misted occasionally to clean its leaves. Keep away from pets and children, as it can be toxic if ingested.

Plant Care Tips

- **Light:** Bright indirect light, but not direct sunlight.
- **Water:** Water well, but allow to dry out between waterings.
- **Soil:** Peat-moss mix.
- **Pet Safety:** Toxic to cats and dogs.

Aloe (Aloe barbadensis)



The aloe plant is a forgiving houseplant that's best known for its [medicinal uses](#), like treating burns and cuts. A small cutting of aloe won't damage the plant, and can serve as an effective remedy to sunburns or rashes. As a member of the succulent family, aloe retains water in its thick leaves, making it a highly drought-tolerant species. It prefers sandy, dry soil, and direct sunlight, so it will likely grow best in the brightest window you can find.

Light: Bright indirect sunlight.

- Water:** Sparingly; allow to dry between watering.
- Soil:** Well-draining soil and sand mixture.
- Pet Safety:** Toxic to cats and dogs.