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## Living Air Cleaners

You probably know that houseplants enhance the beauty of your surroundings, but did you know that many actually clean pollutants out of the air? Basically, these plants work as nature's air filters by adding oxygen and humidity to your indoor environment. Lowe's is happy to provide this information as a [service](#) to you.

Nature's air filters.

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### Common Harmful Airborne Chemicals

Many chemicals (such as formaldehyde, benzene and trichloroethylene) are present in today's tightly insulated homes and offices and can cause a variety of health problems. Consult the chart below for sources and common health problems caused by these chemicals.

Chemical	Sources	Effects
Formaldehyde	Particleboard or pressed wood products, carpet, water repellent, fire retardant, natural gas, kerosene, cigarette smoke	Irritates the eyes, nose, and throat. Can cause headaches and allergic dermatitis.
Benzene	Inks, oils, paints, plastics, rubber	Irritates eyes and skin. Prolonged exposure can cause headaches, loss of appetite, drowsiness.
Trichloroethylene	Dry-cleaning fluid, printing inks, paints, varnishes, adhesives	Considered a carcinogen.

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### Houseplants That Work

All plants remove chemicals from the air to some degree. The following list highlights the most effective pollutant-fighting plants.

Plant Name	Primarily Effective Against
<a href="#">Bromeliad</a> , <a href="#">Aloe</a> , <a href="#">Spider Plant</a> , <a href="#">Poinsettia</a> , <a href="#">Weeping Fig</a> , <a href="#">Philodendron</a>	Formaldehyde
<a href="#">Chinese Evergreen</a>	Benzene

Bamboo Palm, <a href="#">Chrysanthemum</a> , Miniature Umbrella Plant	Benzene, Formaldehyde
<a href="#">Orchid</a>	Ammonia, Acetone, Formaldehyde
<a href="#">Janet Craig</a>	Benzene, Trichloroethylene
<a href="#">Warneckii</a> , Madagascar Dragon Tree, <a href="#">Golden Pothos</a> , <a href="#">Gerbera Daisy</a> , <a href="#">English Ivy</a> , Mother-in-law's Tongue, <a href="#">Peace Lily</a>	Benzene, Trichloroethylene, Formaldehyde

Other varieties that are especially effective are the [snake plant](#) and several types of [dracaena](#). Exotic houseplants (like [bird of paradise](#), elephant-ear philodendrons and flowering banana plants) are also good bets.

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### How Many Plants Do I Need?

It takes one or two good-sized plants to purify the air in a 10' x 10' room, depending on the level of impurities present. That equates to one large plant per 100 square feet of space.

In general, the more plants you have in the room, the better. Keep in mind that a more heavily polluted environment requires more plants. Getting good results in an entire house requires many plants.

Because each plant has an affinity for different toxins, use a mixture of plants. Most of the houseplants mentioned are relatively easy to grow in moderate to bright indirect sunlight or under fluorescent lighting. Consult our [How to Care for Houseplants](#) article for more information.

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Was this information helpful? Please [let us know](#) your do-it-yourself experiences. We'd love to hear from you!

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