

Fresher Air with Daisies



The term, "phytoremediation" may seem too complicated a word to even *try* sounding out, but quite simply, it means, "*plant restoring balance.*"

When I first heard that plants could clean the air, I thought about my days in elementary school when my teachers taught me that, through photosynthesis, plants release oxygen. Oxygen isn't what I was looking for more of, though. *Cleaner air*, absent of toxins, was what I was hoping phytoremediation could do for me and my family, so I read all about it to see if the claims were true.

As it turns out, NASA, the University of Georgia, and Penn State, are just a few of the reputable organizations that have studied, and found favorable results, in using house plants to rid the air of toxins, specifically gases. Gases listed as VOCs, or volatile organic compounds, such as formaldehyde (found in some detergents and makeup), benzene (found in some plastics and

fabrics) and trichloroethylene (found in some dry-cleaning chemicals) were among the gases studied.

The research found that there was a significant decrease in these and other gases when plants were placed inside buildings or homes.

The way it works is through the same process that facilitates photosynthesis. Plants absorb CO₂ (carbon dioxide) and sunlight and convert them into energy to fuel their own growth. That I knew, and probably you did, too. What I didn't realize, though, was that plants have the ability to absorb other gases, as well!

In fact, some plants are so good at absorbing certain gases, that some companies use plants to "mine" chemicals for them.

Below is a sampling of some of the house plants that work best for cleaning your air. The NASA study, specifically, recommends using one plant per 100 square feet to keep your home air more pure.

I'm going to go buy some of these right now! Also, daisies and chrysanthemums? One more excuse to fill my home with flowers.

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English Ivy (benzene, formaldehyde, trichloroethylene, xylene, toluene)

Snake Plant (benzene, formaldehyde, trichloroethylene, xylene, toluene)

Gerbera Daisy (benzene, formaldehyde, trichloroethylene)

Chrysanthemum (benzene, formaldehyde, ammonia, trichloroethylene, xylene, toluene)

Peace Lily (benzene, formaldehyde, ammonia, trichloroethylene, xylene, toluene)

Selloum Philodendron (formaldehyde)

Elephant Ear Philodendron (formaldehyde)

Heartleaf Philodendron (formaldehyde)

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