



## Air Cleaning Plants

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According to a NASA study, your common indoor plants may be capable of filtering toxins out of the air in your home or office. After reading this, you may want to incorporate some of the plants listed below into your decorating scheme!

Top 10 plants most effective in removing formaldehyde, benzene, and carbon monoxide from the air:

<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Scientific Name</b>
Bamboo Palm	Chamaedorea Seifritzii
Chinese Evergreen	Aglaonema Modestum
English Ivy	Hedera Helix
Gerbera Daisy	Gerbera Jamesonii
Janet Craig	Dracaena "Janet Craig"
Marginata	Dracaena Marginata
Mass cane/Corn Plant	Dracaena Massangeana
Mother in Law's Tongue	Sansevieria Laurentii
Pot Mum	Chrysanthemum morifolium
Peace Lily	Spathiphyllum "Mauna Loa"
Warneckii	Dracaena "Warneckii"

Most of us know what carbon monoxide is and where it can permeate into our houses. But formaldehyde and benzene? Where do these chemicals come into our homes? Here is what I found on the website I visited:

Formaldehyde is a widespread chemical found in virtually all indoor environments. The major sources which have been reported and publicized include urea formaldehyde foam insulation (UFFI) and particle board or pressed wood products used in manufacturing of the office furniture bought today. It is used in consumer paper products which have been treated with UF resins, including grocery bags, waxed papers, facial tissues and paper towels. Many common household cleaning agents contain formaldehyde. UF resins are used as stiffeners, wrinkle resisters, water repellents, fire retardants and adhesive binders in floor coverings, carpet backings and permanent press clothes. Other sources of formaldehyde include heating and cooking fuels like natural gas, kerosene, and cigarette smoke.

Formaldehyde irritates the mucous membranes of the eyes, nose and throat. It is also a highly reactive chemical which combines with protein and can cause allergic contact dermatitis. The most widely reported symptoms from exposure to high levels of this chemical include irritation of the eyes and headaches. Until recently, the most serious of the diseases attributed to formaldehyde exposure was asthma. However, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has recently conducted research which has caused formaldehyde to be strongly suspected of causing a rare type of throat cancer in long term occupants of mobile homes.

Benzene is a very commonly used solvent and is also present in many common items including gasoline, inks, oils, paints, plastics, and rubber. In addition it is used in the manufacture of detergents, explosives, pharmaceuticals, and dyes.

Benzene has long been known to irritate the skin and eyes. In addition, it has been shown to be mutagenic to bacterial cell culture and has shown embryotoxic activity and carcinogenicity in some tests. Evidence also exists that benzene may be a contributing factor in chromosomal aberrations and leukemia in humans. Repeated skin contact with benzene will cause drying, inflammation, blistering and dermatitis. Acute inhalation of high levels of benzene has been reported to cause dizziness, weakness, euphoria, headache, nausea, blurred vision, respiratory diseases, tremors, irregular heartbeat, liver and kidney damage, paralysis and unconsciousness. In animal tests inhalation of benzene led to cataract formation and diseases of the blood and lymphatic systems. Chronic exposure to even relatively low levels causes headaches, loss of appetite, drowsiness, nervousness, psychological disturbances and diseases of the blood system, including anemia and bone marrow diseases.

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