

The many benefits of houseplants

The lines between the outdoors and indoors are being blurred. Homeowners build extensive outdoor living spaces so they can relax on weather-resistant furniture and even cook in lavish kitchens in their backyards. In addition, indoor three-season rooms full of bright, open windows that showcase outdoor vistas challenge the boundaries between outside and inside.

For those working with limited budgets, there are some easy, inexpensive ways to enjoy the majesty of natural landscapes indoors. Houseplants can be used to improve indoor spaces, and they also provide various health benefits.

Help with allergies

According to WebMD, rooms with houseplants tend to have less dust and mold in them than those without any foliage. Leaves and other parts of the plants serve as natural filters, catching airborne particles and allergens. Plants with textured leaves might be especially effective at trapping particles.

Put more oxygen into the air

The human respiratory system works by bringing in oxygen and releasing carbon dioxide. Plants do the opposite during photosynthesis. They absorb carbon dioxide and then release oxygen. Plants can put much more oxygen into

the air, improving indoor conditions.

Increase indoor humidity and reduce illness

Studies from the Agricultural University of Norway found that indoor plants can increase humidity in indoor spaces, which decreases the incidences of sore throats, dry coughs, dry skin, and the common cold. Higher absolute humidity can decrease the chances of survival and transmission of the flu virus.

Filter the air

Researchers who presented their work at the 252nd National Meeting & Exposition of the Amer-

ican Chemical Society found certain houseplants can combat the potentially harmful effects of volatile organic compounds.

Plants may help filter out VOCs like benzene, acetone and formaldehyde, which can enter indoor air via cleaning supplies, dry-cleaned clothes, furniture, printers, and paints.

Improve interior atmosphere

Prevention magazine says plants can be used to screen unattractive areas, moderate room temperature by shading spots from the sun and even reduce noise.

Plants also can improve ambiance and create a pleasing atmosphere in a room.

Can improve mood

Growing and caring for plants can alleviate everyday stress. A nationwide study from UK Magazine Gardeners World found 80 percent of gardeners declared themselves satisfied with life compared to 67 percent among non-gardeners. Gardeners were more positive mentally. Greenery can help people feel more at home and improve mental health. A rehab center in Norway found patients reported a greater increase in well-being four weeks after having greenery added to their surroundings.

Houseplants can improve indoor areas and positively affect personal health.

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