



# Halton Region Master Gardeners

*Serving the communities of Burlington, Hamilton, Milton & Oakville*

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## Can House Plants Clean Air?

Yes! In fact, The National Aeronautics & Space Administration in the U.S. in its search for natural, effective filtering systems for its, space stations, did a study in conjunction with the Associated Landscape Contractors of America to determine which house plants best cleanse the air.

The experiments, conducted measured the ability of 20 different foliage plants remove benzene formaldehyde and trichloroethylene from air in a sealed chamber over a 24 hour period. These three contaminants were considered to be those most often found in indoor pollution.

At least a dozen house-plants which can be purchased at almost any garden centre came through the experiments with flying colours.

The best one was *Sansevieria* (Snake Plant) which grows in any location the house and can only be killed by, seriously over-watering! The next runners-up were members of the *Dracaena* family, also easy to grow houseplants which come in many leaf forms and colour variations. In particular, *Dracaena marginata* did very well.

Other plants heading the field in effectively reducing indoor air pollution included: Gerbera Daisy, Bamboo palm, Spider Plant, Mass cane, Peace Lily, (*Spathyphyllum*) and English Ivy.

How many plant are needed? The NASA study indicates that one medium-sized plant (8 inch pot) will cleanse the air in a 100 sq. ft area, so a 2,000 sq. ft. house would need approximately 20 plants. These plants can be placed to suit their requirements, as the ventilation system will move the air past them. Who knows, increasing the number of plants in your home might even help alleviate the winter blues!

So go ahead, green-up your home and breathe easier!



Dracaena



Snake Plant