

WHY HOUSEPLANTS MAKE YOU A HEALTHIER PERSON

Your favorite houseplant is much more than just a pretty thing. Research confirms the real emotional and physical benefits of having plants in the home or workplace. Tony Fulmer, horticulturist and retail manager at Chalet, Wilmette, Illinois, has composed 10 reasons why houseplants can make you and your family healthier.

Top 10 Reasons

1. Whether flowering or just showing their leafy side, plants make us happy. Three different studies have shown that receiving flowering plants always elicits a smile.

2. Plants produce life-giving oxygen while absorbing harmful carbon dioxide.

3. Notice how dry your skin feels in winter when central heat is on? Plants give off water, releasing up to 97 percent of the water we provide them, thus increasing the humidity in our dry homes. Schefflera is particularly effective in increasing humidity.

4. Houseplants may seem a pretty accessory, but they're actually working hard to absorb volatile compounds (benzene, formaldehyde, etc.). With so much emphasis on new buildings being "tight" and energy efficient, many now retain more of these toxic compounds. One study found that as few as 15 houseplants (planted in 6- to 8-inch diameter containers) throughout a house removed 87 percent of the toxins in an 1800-square-foot home in only one day.

5. Plants have a calming influence and actually reduce stress and illness. Studies have shown lowered blood pressure readings, as well as reduced headaches and fatigue, with the presence of plants in an indoor environment. Scandinavian studies have shown that houseplants can reduce coughs, sore throats and other cold related illnesses substantially -- more than 30 percent.

6. Plants can increase learning. European research found that university attendance improved, test scores rose and behavioral problems were reduced by more than 60 percent in classrooms with plants as opposed to sterile "nonplant" environments. Kids, your parents can have up to 12 percent quicker reaction time on a computer task in a room with plants.



WHY HOUSEPLANTS MAKE YOU A HEALTHIER PERSON

Top 10 Reasons (cont.)

7. For families with small children and loud pets, plants with large leaf mass and “harder” leaf surfaces (Ficus, Spathiphyllum and Dracaena, for example) cut noise pollution by absorbing and reflecting noise. This is especially true in rooms with hard surfaces such as marble walls and stone floors.



8. For maximum benefit, try small groupings of plants around the room rather than a single large one. Also, place these groupings in corners rather than in the center of the room.

9. Ever think of interior landscaping specifically for personal health reasons? Bromeliads, many orchids and easy-to-care-for succulents (think jade plant) intensify their oxygen production/ carbon dioxide absorption cycle at night. Consider these for your bedroom.



10. Is a friend or family member at home recuperating from a hospital stay? Flowering or foliage plants inside a patient’s room can dramatically reduce anxiety, recovery time, pain and the number of minor post-surgical complications.

