

Chatting with The Good Dr. Laura Shook
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Recently I saw an article in the Wichita Eagle discussing global warming and the possibility of using technology to purposely cool the climate. This technology was referred to as “geoengineering”. Creating artificial trees to suck carbon dioxide out of the air was one suggestion and another was pumping sulfur dioxide into the stratosphere, as volcanoes do, to block the sun and cool the planet. It all sounds so Bradbury, so “Sci Fi” and a lot like something I might see on late night television. I think the futuristic scientist-astronaut called it terraforming.

I am a chiropractor not a geoengineer, and know little about stratospheres. Nor do I know much about what we would do with carbon dioxide once the artificial trees had sucked it up. Would the carbon be stored and if so would it be toxic? Who would build these wannabe trees and volcanoes? AND please tell me that the committee in charge would look beyond the lowest bid when handing out the contract.

High school biology and life experience has taught me that plants, real plants, do a humdinger of a job removing toxins and stinky stuff from the air. I’ve always kept my office loaded with plant life. Each and every time I walk through the doors I am greeted with a breath of fresh air. Even when our parking lot received an oh-so-stinky coating of black top, the inside of my office remained fresh as a new spring day. I was most impressed.

It is not only my plant filled chiropractic world that has benefited from an abundance of green things. NASA too, in an effort to create a sustainable life-support system for a planned moon base habitat, has found that plants did a fine job of keeping air fresh and water clean. Even the latest issue of Consumer Reports On Health mentions that recovering surgery patients who had plants in their hospital room needed fewer painkillers and reported less post-op anxiety than patients who had no plants. The plant group also had lower heart rates and blood-pressure readings.”

I do not believe I exaggerate when I say “Plants ROCK”. Perhaps, while the geoengineers work up their Power Point presentations and budgetary needs, we could all benefit from planting a tree or two and maybe adding a fern, ficus and philodendron to our parlors.

Recommended Reading

“How to Grow Fresh Air, 50 House Plants that Purify Your Home or Office”, a book by Dr. F.C. Wolverton, discusses the use of houseplants to purify and revitalize the air within any indoor environment. A chapter devoted plant biology explains the wondrous process where by these beautiful green creatures release oxygen and water into the environment while at the same time absorbing carbon dioxide and a slew of toxic vapors. Palms, ivy, ficus and ferns, 50 different houseplants were selected, studied, photographed and described for their ability to absorb chemical vapors, their ease of growing, and resistance to bug infestation.

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