

What Has Dr. Shook, Been Reading?

How To Grow Fresh Air, 50 Houseplants that Purify Your Home or Office

By Dr. F.C. Wolverton

Penguin Books 1997

Based upon NASA research and studies co-sponsored by Plants For Clean Air Council and Wolverton Environmental Services, Incorporated, *How to Grow Fresh Air* discusses the use of houseplants to purify and revitalize the air within any indoor environment.

Indoor pollution can be harmful to human health. Allergies, asthma, burning eyes, sinus congestion, headache and fatigue can be the result of indoor air pollution. A phenomenon known as "sick building syndrome." has been added to our modern vocabulary.

NASA, after extensive studies on treating and recycling air and wastewater, found that plants work nicely in the creation of a sustainable life-support system for a planned moon base habitat. Like NASA ... and the planet Earth ... a home or office will benefit from the air cleaning and purifying properties of plants ... yup ... good old houseplants.

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.

*How to Grow Fresh Air* is a bit scientific with charts, abbreviations and a systematic organization. The discussion of toxins and volatile gasses released from building materials, synthetic fabrics and human bodies is brief, a bit frightening and to the point. The growers guide will introduce a variety of potting, watering and lighting methods.

It really is a delightful book. In addition to an excellent discussion of indoor environmental hazards and a fine explanation of plant physiology, the reader is provided with plenty of beautiful pictures to aid in the visualization of one's own personal breathing zone.

I've added a potted palm to the greenery in my home and I'll be adding some ferns to the Jungle in my office. If you spend your day hermetically sealed within a building ... If you suspect the air-conditioning system could use some dynamic assistance ... If allergies and respiratory infections are plaguing you, your family and/or your coworkers...Dr. Wolverton's *How to Grow Fresh Air*, might be just the book for you.

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