Volume 4, Issue 1
January I 2026

Agri Roots
e- Magazine

www.agrirootsmagazine.in

ISSN: 2583-9071

Nature Inside: Indoor Plants for Beauty, Health, and Clean Air

ARTICLE ID: 0322

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Indoor plants have become an integral part of modern homes, offices, hospitals, and educational institutions. With increasing urbanization and reduced access to natural green spaces, indoor plants provide an effective means of bringing nature indoors. Beyond their decorative appeal, indoor plants significantly improve indoor air quality, regulate the microclimate, and enhance physical, psychological, and emotional well-being. From a floriculture perspective, indoor and air-purifying plants represent a rapidly expanding and economically important sector.

What Are Indoor Plants?

Indoor plants are ornamental plants grown inside buildings under controlled or semi-controlled environmental conditions. These plants are generally adapted to low or medium light intensity, stable temperatures, and limited air circulation. Most indoor plants are foliage plants valued for their attractive leaves, while some flowering plants are also widely used for interior decoration.

Importance of Indoor Plants

1. Aesthetic and Decorative Value

Indoor plants add colour, texture, and freshness to interior spaces. They soften architectural structures, enhance visual appeal, and create a calm and welcoming environment. Foliage plants with varied leaf shapes and colours are especially popular in interior landscaping.

2. Improvement of Indoor Air Quality

Indoor air often contains pollutants such as formaldehyde, benzene, toluene, xylene, ammonia, and carbon monoxide released from furniture, paints, carpets, and electronic devices. Many indoor plants absorb these pollutants through their leaves and root systems, acting as natural biofilters and improving indoor air quality.

3. Health and Psychological Benefits

The presence of greenery indoors helps reduce stress, anxiety, and mental fatigue. Indoor plants improve concentration, productivity, and overall mood, making

them particularly beneficial in offices, classrooms, and healthcare facilities.

4. Regulation of Indoor Microclimate

Through transpiration, indoor plants increase relative humidity and help maintain a comfortable indoor environment. This reduces dryness caused by air conditioning and helps prevent respiratory irritation, dry skin, and eye discomfort.

Major Indoor and Air-Purifying Plants

A. Foliage and Air-Purifying Plants

- **Money plant (*Epipremnum aureum*)**: Removes formaldehyde and carbon monoxide; easy to grow and propagate.
- **Snake plant (*Sansevieria trifasciata*)**: Releases oxygen at night; ideal for bedrooms and low-light areas.
- **Spider plant (*Chlorophytum comosum*)**: Effective in removing carbon monoxide and xylene.
- **Areca palm (*Dypsis lutescens*)**: Acts as a natural humidifier and improves air quality.
- **Rubber plant (*Ficus elastica*)**: Large leaves efficiently absorb airborne toxins and dust.
- **Dracaena (*Dracaena marginata*, *D. deremensis*)**: Removes benzene, formaldehyde, and toluene.
- **Bamboo palm (*Chamaedorea seifrizii*)**: Effective against benzene and trichloroethylene.
- **Boston fern (*Nephrolepis exaltata*)**: Improves humidity and removes formaldehyde.
- **English ivy (*Hedera helix*)**: Reduces airborne mold and formaldehyde.
- **Peace lily (*Spathiphyllum wallisii*)**: Absorbs ammonia, benzene, and acetone and produces elegant white flowers.

B. Flowering Indoor Plants

- **Anthurium (*Anthurium andraeanum*)**: Attractive spathes with moderate air-purifying ability.
- **Orchids (*Phalaenopsis* spp.)**: Long-lasting blooms with high ornamental value.
- **African violet (*Saintpaulia ionantha*)**: Compact flowering plant suitable for small indoor spaces.

C. Succulents and Low-Maintenance Plants

- **Aloe vera (*Aloe vera*)**: Removes benzene and formaldehyde; also valued for medicinal use.
- **Jade plant (*Crassula ovata*)**: Drought-tolerant and decorative.
- **ZZ plant (*Zamioculcas zamiifolia*)**: Highly tolerant to low light and irregular watering.

Indoor Plants and Pollutants Removed

Indoor Plant	Botanical Name	Major Pollutants Removed
Money plant	*Epipremnum aureum*	Formaldehyde, CO
Snake plant	*Sansevieria trifasciata*	NO_2, Xylene
Spider plant	*Chlorophytum comosum*	CO, Xylene
Peace lily	*Spathiphyllum wallisii*	Benzene, Ammonia
Areca palm	*Dypsis lutescens*	Toluene, Xylene
Rubber plant	*Ficus elastica*	Formaldehyde

Dracaena	*Dracaena* spp.	Benzene, Trichloroethylene
Boston fern	*Nephrolepis exaltata*	Formaldehyde
Aloe vera	*Aloe vera*	Benzene, Formaldehyde

Role of Indoor Plants in Floriculture

Indoor plants constitute an important segment of the floriculture industry. They are propagated through cuttings, division, and tissue culture, enabling large-scale, year-round production. Interior landscaping, corporate greening, nursery trade, and export of foliage plants generate employment and income. The growing demand for eco-friendly and health-oriented living spaces has further increased the commercial importance of indoor and air-purifying plants.

Conclusion

Indoor plants beautifully combine aesthetics with function. They enhance interior spaces, purify indoor air, improve health, and contribute to emotional well-being. Easy to maintain and adaptable, indoor plants offer natural solutions for cleaner air and healthier living. Promoting their use supports sustainable urban lifestyles while strengthening the floriculture sector.

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