

# Green shoots: The best air purifiers cost the least

Durgesh Nandan Jha  
@timesgroup.com

**New Delhi:** It's not just air purifiers, but the sale of indoor plants have also increased with the decline in air quality in Delhi. The demand for plants such as Sansevieria, Areca Palm, English Ivy and Boston fern, which are known to reduce the negative impact of toxic fumes, have gone up.

Nursery owners say people are buying them by the dozen to counter the impact of pollution, particularly if they have a family member with respiratory illness. Those with little space to put flower pots are opting for vertical gardens, a concept utilised successfully at Rashtrapati Bhawan.

"Sansevieria, also referred to as mother-in-law's tongue perhaps because of its sharp leaves, is the most popular. While most plants imbibe oxygen at night, this one released it at

## THESE PLANTS WILL CLEAN YOUR AIR

### SPIDER PLANT

**Where:** Useful in kitchens with gas stoves

**Why:** Controls carbon monoxide, xylene



### SANSEVIERIA, OR MOTHER-IN-LAW'S TONGUE

**Where:** Potted plant, can be put in balcony or near the window

**Why:** Helps absorb carbon monoxide



### BOSTON FERN

**Where:** Best for hanging baskets, grows easily in bright to medium light

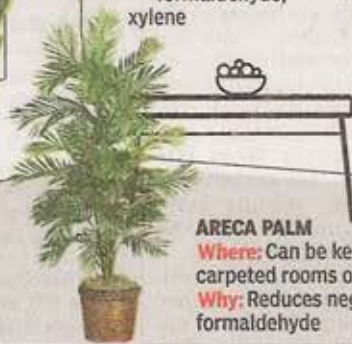
**Why:** Reduces formaldehyde, xylene



### ARECA PALM

**Where:** Can be kept anywhere, but especially useful in carpeted rooms or those with freshly painted furniture

**Why:** Reduces negative impact of xylene and formaldehyde



### ENGLISH IVY

**Where:** Best for hanging baskets, effective in freshly painted rooms, or those with

computers, printers, fax machines, and at petrol stations

**Why:** Acts against benzene, formaldehyde, xylene



**Nursery owners say people are buying indoor plants to counter the impact of pollution, particularly if they have a family member with respiratory illness**

sale of plants known for their air purifying qualities have gone up 40% post-Diwali.

There are few studies to show the science behind the belief that plants help curb pollution. One of them, which proponents of the theory and horticulturalists like Saini refer to, is done by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). It states: "Low-light requiring houseplants, along with activated carbon plant filters, have demonstrated the potential for improving indoor air quality by removing trace organic pollutants from the air in energy efficient buildings."

Dr Sandeep Salvi, director of the Pune-based Chest Research Foundation, claimed the theory about certain plants helping improve indoor air quality has also been proved through exposure experiments. "The microbes in soil and leaves absorb volatile chemicals, thus reducing pollution," he said.

Some of the buyers whom TOI spoke to said that plants are a good idea, regardless of whether it is backed by science or not. "Our cities have turned into concrete jungles. We must change it for better health. In-house plantation and making the back lanes green is my way of doing it," said Payal Kapoor, a resident of Safdarjung Enclave.

As per the 2010 global burden of disease report, outdoor air pollution caused more than 6.2 lakh premature deaths in India and nearly 18 million healthy years of life were lost that year.

night," said AM Khan, owner of Rajdhani Nursery in Jor Bagh of South Delhi. "A few years

ago, there were no takers for this plant and we dumped nearly 2,000 of them. But now we are

searching for it from our suppliers in Karnataka, Trivendrum and other places due to the in-

creased demand," he added.

Padmachand Saini, owner of Joginder Nursery, said the



## POLLUTION BLIGHT

AIR QUALITY INDEX PM2.5

Delhi	340	Very Poor
Tomorrow	352	Very Poor
Pune	129	Moderate
Tomorrow	134	Moderate
Mumbai	206	Poor
Tomorrow	214	Poor

Source: SAFAR@MoES-IITM-IMD (10 stations)

Hyderabad	67	Good
Chennai	63	Good
Kolkata	278	Poor

US Embassy data calculated as per Indian standards by SAFAR@MoES-IITM-IMD  
Based on 1 Station Data Per City at 4pm