

The benefits of houseplants



The lines between the outdoors and indoors are being blurred. Homeowners build extensive outdoor living spaces so they can relax on weather-resistant furniture and even cook in lavish kitchens in their backyards. In addition, indoor three-season rooms full of bright, open windows that showcase outdoor vistas challenge the boundaries between outside and inside.

For those working with limited budgets, there are some easy, inexpensive ways to enjoy the majesty of natural landscapes indoors. Houseplants can be used to improve indoor spaces and they also provide various health benefits.

Help with allergies.

According to WebMD, rooms with houseplants tend to have less dust and mold in them than those without any foliage. Leaves and other parts of the plants serve as natural filters, catching airborne particles and allergens. Plants with textured leaves might be especially effective at trapping particles.

Put more oxygen into the air.

The human respiratory system works by bringing in oxygen and releasing carbon dioxide. Plants

do the opposite during photosynthesis. They absorb carbon dioxide and then release oxygen. Plants can put much more oxygen into the air, improving indoor conditions.

Increase indoor humidity and reduce illness.

Studies from the Agricultural University of Norway found that indoor plants can increase humidity in indoor spaces, which decreases the incidences of sore throats, dry coughs, dry skin and the common cold. Higher absolute humidity can decrease the chances of survival and transmission of the flu virus.

Filter the air.

Researchers who presented their work at the 252nd National Meeting and Exposition of the

American Chemical Society found certain houseplants can combat the potentially harmful effects of volatile organic compounds (VOC). Plants may help filter out VOCs like benzene, acetone and formaldehyde, which can enter indoor air via cleaning supplies, dry-cleaned clothes, furniture, printers and paints.

Improve interior atmosphere.

Prevention magazine says plants can be used to screen unattractive areas, moderate room temperature by shading spots from the sun and even reduce noise. Plants also can improve ambiance and create a pleasing atmosphere in a room.

Can improve mood.

Growing and caring for plants can alleviate everyday stress. A nationwide study from UK Magazine Gardeners World found 80 percent of gardeners declared

themselves satisfied with life compared to 67 percent among non-gardeners. Gardeners were more positive mentally. Greenery can help people feel more at home and improve mental health. A rehab center in Norway found patients reported a greater increase in well-being four weeks after having greenery added to their surroundings.

Houseplants can improve indoor areas and positively affect personal health.



Brood X ready to make its presence known

Large swarms can damage young trees, but won't destroy crops

Just when people thought it may be safe to take a collective breath after the roller coaster year that was 2020, something big is on the way – and they're planning on arriving in the billions.

Brood X, also known as the Great Eastern Brood, will be emerging from the soil after many years developing underground. Brood X is a generation of cicadas (*magicicada cassini*) that only appears once every 17 years. Scientists group cicadas based on the year they see the light of day after growing in subterranean bunkers. Some emerge annually, some after 13 years and others after 17 years. Scientists speculate that the unusual, prime-numbered life cycles prevent generations of cicadas from having run-ins with the life cycles of wasps that prey on them. Another theory says the timing reduces the likelihood that 17-year cicadas will mate and

hybridize with cicadas of different species or generations.

Brood X is one of the most widespread and prolific cicada generations. The insects are likely to appear mostly along the eastern coast of the United States, but could extend as far west as Missouri and Illinois. Cicadas are preparing to climb trees, start their incessant mating calls, which experts at Iowa State University note have been likened to "pressing scissors against a grind wheel in rapid succession," and shed their exoskeleton shells in a neighborhood near you. Expect to start seeing them in late April and early May.

Cicadas are unique insects. Despite their large size and bulbous eyes, cicadas aren't harmful to humans. Nymphs live in the soil and feed on roots. Mature adults come out in the spring to breed and lay eggs after being triggered

by warmer soil temperatures. The University of Florida's Book of Insect Records says the noises cicadas "sing" are how they communicate, reproduce and even scare predators away. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services states that cicada songs can reach 90 decibels, which is the equivalent of the noise made by a lawn mower or dirt bike.

It is easy to distinguish cicadas from other insects. Cicadas are quite large, measuring at .75 to 2.25 inches in length. They have stout bodies, broad heads and clear-membraned wings, according to National Geographic.

Cicadas do not eat vegetation, but drink the sap from tree roots, twigs and branches. They also don't decimate crops like locusts can, though large swarms may overwhelm and damage young trees. Adults will die four to six weeks after emerging, so there's



limited time to get to know this insect before it's gone for another 17 years. Apart from hearing their calls, people know cicadas have arrived when they find discarded cicada shells on their properties, which are left behind after the insects molt.

Brood X is waiting to peek out of the soil and communities will have about a month to cohabitate with these interesting insects before they say, "Until we meet again."

"Your Complete Floorcovering Center"

- Carpet
- Area rugs
- Luxury vinyl planks and tile
- Remnants
- Vinyl, laminate and hardwood flooring
- Expert installation

Large selection of in-stock floor coverings

-CDC guidelines -

Richard's
CARPET
OUTLET

Corner of U.S. 224 and SR 18
Tiffin • 419-448-1375