

GROW Home, Garden & Outdoors

Clean AIR in your home

As the American population has been made more aware of the dangers of greenhouse gases, one area that doesn't get as much attention is poor indoor air quality.

The quality of air can be two to five times more polluted than the worst outside air. This is because of the many indoor pollutants floating around our homes from sources such as gas, oil, kerosene, building materials and chemical products.

Plants to the Rescue
In the 1980s, NASA and the Associated Landscape Contractors of America carried out an in-depth study on which house plants were the most effective in purifying the air in space. Several of the tested plants were proven to filter out common volatile organic compounds that can negatively impact our health and well-being.

Here are three of the most effective house plants for cleaning your air:

Aloe: The study found that aloe helps clear both formaldehyde and benzene, which are generally byproducts of chemical-based cleaners.

Spider Plants: Also safe for the pets in your home, spider plants are quick to battle benzene, formaldehyde and carbon monoxide. Their unique stringy foliage makes them perfect for hanging baskets.

Azaleas: These budding beauties are best grown in cooler temperatures, making them perfect for improving an indoor area such as a basement.

Dirty Sock Syndrome

Even though it may not have a very scientific-sounding name, dirty sock syndrome can have a serious impact on the overall smell of your home. The problem most commonly occurs when bacteria that has built up from the moisture in your air ducts and system during cooling season are dried up and killed when you begin using heat.

This can result in a "dirty sock" smell being emitted from your ducts that is both annoying and overwhelming. Call your local heating and cooling professional, who for a fee can resolve the issue by spraying an antibacterial solution on your unit's coils. Hopefully you'll be back to odorless air in no time.

'Character poles' beautify interiors

By Katherine Stickroth
For the Chieftain

Nestled in mountain meadows, or within the dramatic canyons, or at The Village at the head of Wallowa Lake, stand houses that reflect the natural world of Wallowa County. Bronson Log Homes, owned by Dean Himes, is the builder of many of these log and frame structures. They also participate with other building contractors on such projects as upgrading the Ponderosa Motel in Enterprise where they provided material for siding and railings.

Though capable of taking a structural idea from design to finish, BLH expends much effort in interior design. The unique concepts that incorporate material found in the acres of Forest Service land lend one-of-a-kind styles which would please any homeowner, city or rural.

Chuck Short, project manager for BLH, has spent years hiking in the national forests searching for what he calls "character poles." With a Forest Service permit in hand, he locates logs downed from severe storms in the mountains, then transports them via the nearest road.

Weathered by subsequent wind and rain, fallen trees with interesting knots, burls and scars are envisioned by Chuck as potential objects of art to be incorporated in stairs, railings, furniture and other home furnishings.

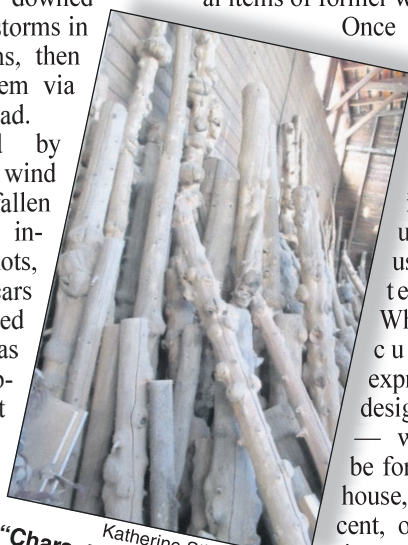
"I look for interesting bends and curls, or wood diseased by cancer and fungus," says Chuck.

The BLH shop is the former Snyder lumber and coal



BLH Manager Chuck Short, right, discusses a project with Jeff Staidle, center, and Justin Hernandez.

shed in Enterprise, where names of past employees are emblazoned on the walls with dates such as 1916 or 1928. Occasionally, a lump of coal will appear, as well as personal items of former workers.



"Character" poles waiting to be used for another BLH creation.

Once dried, the material from the forest is stored in bins until its use is determined. When a customer expresses a design idea — whether it be for an entire house, an accent, or for furniture — Chuck reviews his inventory and together they determine ways to fit the character of the wood into the final product.

"We can help clients turn a simple idea into a reality of beauty that would enhance

any lifestyle," Chuck says.

The wood, either Lodgepole and Ponderosa Pine, is then power-washed or hand-peeled. The latter process is accomplished with the use of a shaving horse. The tool, dating back to the 15th century, has been used throughout the world to make roof shakes, buckets, spindles, wheels — anything necessary for the needs of that time.

On a trip to Seattle several years ago, Chuck came across a replica of a shaving horse and realized its advantages to BLH's endeavors. He took measurements and came home to build one. It has proved invaluable to peel bark off their logs.

The project is moved into the assembly room, where dovetailed drawers are created for cabinetry. Dead limbs

are assembled as panels for railings. Table tops are attached to log platforms for a dining table or coffee table. Smaller poles are fit together to make a bunk bed.

Quantities of epoxy are determined by the utility of the project. A light coat is administered for indoor furniture. Outdoor accents receive heavier protection. Counter tops for kitchen and bathroom vanities are given many layers to ensure protection from water damage.

BLH has repeat customers as far away as Seattle, but its work is also admired by customers closer to home, by people such as Wallowa's Becky Riverman, who declared: "The beauty and the quality of their workmanship are excellent. Their work was perfect. When our friends come by and see the accent logs, they say, 'Wow!'"

BLH can be found on the Web at bronsonloghomes.com. The firm's phone number is 541-426-6072.

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6TH ANNUAL 2015

WALLOWA COUNTY GIANT TOMATO CONTEST

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OFFICIAL RULES

The Wallowa County Giant Tomato Contest is open only to residents of Wallowa County. Joseph Hardware is the official weigh-in spot, taking weights through September 28th, 2015 before 7 pm. Heaviest tomato wins.

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