

38 Great Foliage Plants for Your Home

Houseplants are a wonderful way to add interest to the indoor landscape. When you consider the vast array of houseplants that are available, you're sure to find one that fits your environment! A real benefit, many plants help to improve indoor air quality. If you're new to growing plants indoors or are a seasoned "green thumb," here are a few suggestions for how to grow, what to grow, and some common problems you could encounter along the way.

Houseplant Care Basics

Watering

Simply put, plants cannot be put on a watering schedule. The notion of watering every Tuesday will not work! There are several factors to consider:

- ❖ How warm is the area? Warmer air will cause the plants to dry more quickly.
- ❖ What's the weather like? Plants will use more water on sunny days than overcast.
- ❖ What's the soil like? Heavier soils will hold more water than lighter soils.

Overwatering is the most common cause of houseplant demise! So, how do you water correctly? Here's how: When watering, always water plants thoroughly and deeply until it runs out the bottom. Remember to empty saucer of excess water; never allow plants to sit in saucers filled with water. This poor practice can lead to root rot. Water again when the surface feels dry to the touch; inserting your finger at least an inch into the soil. When the soil feels dry, water again following the same procedure as above. For larger pots, stick your finger several inches into the soil to check for dryness.

Our homes are dry when compared to the humidity that naturally occurs outdoors. The use of radiators,

forced hot air blowers and fireplaces further contribute to dry air. How do you get around this? The use of a pebble tray can help. Here's how:

- ❖ Select a tray large enough to hold your plant(s).
- ❖ Using clean pebbles or stones, line the tray with them.
- ❖ Set the plants on top of the pebbles and fill the tray with water, covering the pebbles.
- ❖ Place the plants on top of the pebbles, but do not let the pots sit in the water.
- ❖ Keep a supply of water available.

Temperature

Most plants do have a preferred temperature range; some will tolerate cooler night temperatures than others. It's important to know the conditions inside your home BEFORE you select a plant

Light

It's time to do some homework. Determine the exposure in a room(s) before you buy. To make it easy, let's talk about plants in terms of low, medium and high light needs. Unless you're fortunate to have a greenhouse, we all face the limiting factors of growing plants under less than ideal light conditions. Knowing your exposure and then choosing a plant to fit the location should give you a high degree of success.

- ❖ **Low** -- 10 feet or more away from a window with no direct light; directly in a north window with obstructions. Dull hallways.
- ❖ **Medium** -- 4-10 feet away from an east, south or west window; directly in front of an unobstructed north window. Bright indirect light.

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❖ High -- 4 feet or less from unobstructed south, east or west windows; bright direct light or sunlight.

Recommended Houseplants

Here are some recommended plants for the home. A visit to your local garden center will open up a world of possibilities; some which should be on this list. Seek out a knowledgeable staff person at the garden center to assist you. Know the three basics from above and let them assist you with your selections.

Aglaonema sp.

Chinese Evergreen

Low light. Warm temperature. Keep dust off leaves. Can grow directly in water. Propagate easily by cutting stems into pieces. Watch for scale.



Araucaria heterophylla

Norfolk Island Pine

High light, turn plant frequently to encourage uniform shape. Prefers cool temperature, but tolerates 65-75°. Do not remove terminal tip. Watch for presence of mites. Accent plant in planters, small or large specimen.



Asparagus densiflorus Var. Sprengeri

Asparagus Fern

High light. Cool night room temperatures of 55-60° preferred. Likes additional humidity. Best as a filler or good for planters. Keep soil evenly moist.



Aspidistra elatior

Cast-iron Plant

(also variegated form)

Low light. Temperature not critical. Keep dust off leaves. Good filler plant in a grouping or small floor specimen.



Beaucarnea recurvata

Pony Tail Plant

Medium to high light plant. Prefers low night temperatures of 55 degrees, but withstands fluctuations, as well. Fertilize seldom-- once or twice yearly. Develops a swollen bulbous base as a water reservoir. Avoid overwatering. Repot infrequently.

Brassaia actinophylla

Schefflera

Medium light. Warm room temperatures of 70-75° preferred. Enjoys being pot-bound. Keep leaves free of dust. Accent plant in planters or large specimen. May quickly grow out of scale. Spider mites can frequently be a problem.



Chamaedorea elegans

Parlor or Neanthe bella palm

Low to medium light, normal room temperature of 65° F preferred. If dry atmosphere and bright sunlight, leaves of most palms will brown. Keep soil barely moist - some humidity will prove beneficial.

Repot only when thoroughly root bound. Small specimen or accent plant in planters. Examine periodically for spider mites.



Chlorophytum comosum

Spider Plant

Medium light and average house temperatures. Plantlets form from runners making this a spectacular



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hanging specimen. Short days during fall are necessary to initiate runner formation on stubborn plants. Do not overpot or allow to excessively dry out.

Chrysalidocarpus lutescens **Areca Palm**

Medium indirect light, normal room temperature. Keep soil barely moist. Repot infrequently (may slow down growth). Grows tall fast and can be pruned back. Most graceful of palms, but intolerant of low light. Examine periodically for spider mites.



Cissus rhombifolia **Grape Ivy**

Medium light. Easily conditioned to low light situations. Cooler room temperatures of 60° F preferred but tolerates higher. Keep leaves free of dust. Emerging new foliage covered with a silvery felt. Avoid over watering; soil should be kept barely moist. Dry areas should be avoided.

Codiaeum sp. **Croton**

High light is important to retain the color in leaves. Keep temperature above 55° F. Potting mix should be kept evenly moist. Can be propagated by tip cuttings or air layering. Good as a specimen or floor plant. Can be pruned to keep in bounds.



Coffea arabica **Coffee plant**

Interesting food plant to grow. High or bright, indirect light. A fast grower that may need pruning to keep in shape. Used as an accent plant. Fragrant white flowers will produce coffee beans if pollinated. Keep soil barely moist and provide day temperatures of 70 - 75° F.

Crassula argentea **Jade Plant**

High or medium light. Prefers cool temperature of 55-65° F. Avoid over watering; soil should dry out slightly between waterings. Small pot specimen or accent plant.



Dieffenbachia sp. **Dumb Cane**

Medium to high light, warm indoor temperatures of 65-75° F preferred. Will not tolerate overwatering. Can be cut back and easily propagated many ways. Accent plant in planters or specimen. Keep away from drafts. It is normal for this plant to lose its lower leaves sporadically. Poisonous to humans and animals.



Dracaena deremensis **'Warneckii'**

Medium light. Can be conditioned to lower light. Keep soil barely moist. Prefers normal room temperature of 65-70° F.. Pot in groups of three for use in planters. Examine for spider mites.



Dracaena fragrans 'Massangeana' **Corn Plant**

Culture same as for Dracaena deremensis but it will produce only one side shoot when cut back. Grows fast and very large.



Dracaena marginata

Medium light. Prefers normal room temperature 60-65° F. Accent plant. Develops into a large specimen. Rarely branches. For decorating



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interest, select those that have twisted or braided stems.

Epipremnum aureum

Pothos

Medium light, but will tolerate lower although loses colorful leaf markings. Warm room temperatures of 70° F preferred. Although a hanging plant, can be trained into many interesting forms, i.e. totems. An easy plant to propagate from stem and terminal tip cuttings.



Fatsia japonica

Japanese Aralia

High light preferred, will tolerate bright indirect light. Prefers cool temperatures of 55-65° F. Keep leaves free of dust. Wider than high. Good specimen plant for table top when small, better for floor planters when large.



Ficus binnendijkii

Alii Fig

Will tolerate medium light. Unique long and narrow foliage is a distinguishing feature. More tolerant of lesser light and drier conditions as compared with F. benjamina (see below.) Not as prone to dropping leaves, but will, if it gets too dry. Grown as a specimen floor plant.

Ficus benjamina

Weeping Fig

Normal room temperature of 65° F, medium to high light. Any variation to lower light intensity will trigger leaf drop. Prune selectively in March. Large fast-growing specimen plant that accepts pruning. Avoid fluctuations with watering - keep



soil evenly moist. There are better species of Ficus to consider for use inside the home.

Ficus lyrata

Fiddle Leaf Fig

Normal room temperature of 65° F. Medium to high light needed for best growth. Do not repot frequently. Large, coarse floor specimen. Keep large leaves free of dust. Avoid letting the soil dry out or leaf drop will result. Avoid over watering, as well. Keep soil barely moist for best results.

Fittonia sp.

Nerve Plant

Low to medium light. Warm room temperatures. Very sensitive to drafts. Provide additional humidity. Good terrarium plant. Small and large leaved varieties.



Hedera helix vars.

English Ivy

Prefers high or medium light, but will survive low light. A low temperature of 45-55° F discourages mite attack. Wash foliage to remove dust accumulating on leaves.



Hoya carnosa

Wax Plant

Medium light (may flower if given high light). Water frequently if flower buds are evident. Warm or cool indoor temperatures. Humidity not necessary. Endless uses, i.e., trailing, totem, dish garden.



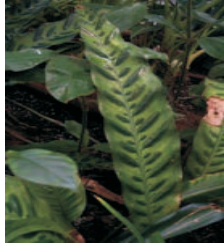
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Maranta leuconeura

Prayer Plant

Medium light. Room temperatures should not be less than 65° F and no drafts. Water less frequently in winter. Additional humidity important. Small pot specimen and good cover in planters.



Philodendron oxycardium

Heart leaf Philodendron

Low to medium light. Warm night temperatures of 70° F are preferred. If grown on a totem, try to keep sphagnum moss moist. Never hesitate cutting back. Propagates easily from leaf or tip cuttings. Useful as a hanging or trellis plant, ground cover in planters. One of the most adaptable groups of plants.

Philodendron Selloum

Selloum

A common non-climbing philodendron with a wide-spreading habit. Very tolerant of low maintenance. Culture same as that described for Philodendron oxycardium.

Phoenix Roebelenii

Pygmy Date Palm

High light. Thrives in normal room temperatures. Encourage a winter rest period with temperatures of 50-55° F. Keep soil evenly moist, but never soggy. Repot every 2-3 years using a mixture of sterilized soil, peatmoss, sand or perlite. Feed regularly; allow a winter rest.

Pittosporum tobira

High light and low temperature at night. Fertilize infrequently (3-4 times a year) and keep in a pot-bound condition. Easily pruned in spring, if necessary. Tolerant of drafts. Excellent specimen.



Plectranthus australis

Swedish Ivy

Medium to high light. Tolerant of low light, but grows leggy. Normal night temperatures of 55-65° F are preferred. Pinch back terminal growth to keep full. Do not let soil dry out; keep evenly moist.

Podocarpus macrophyllus

High light. Prefers cooler room temperatures of 60-65° F but tolerates warmer. Selectively prune each spring. Use as single-stem tubbed specimen.



Pteris sp.

Brake or Table Fern

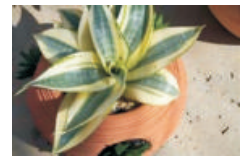
Medium to low light, low night temperature of 50-55° F are preferred. Keep soil moist. Repot before becoming pot-bound. Many species and varieties of dwarf ferns highly recommended for their slow growth and adaptability to the home environment.



Sansevieria trifasciata

Snake Plant

Low to medium light. Normal room temperatures. Use in dish gardens or as multiple specimens. Over watering and drafts are the only known problems.



Spathiphyllum sp.

Peace Lily

Low light (will flower in medium light). Provide warm room temperatures and no drafts. Filler plants for planters or small specimen. Never allow the soil to dry excessively. An exceptionally good houseplant. Large and small-leaved varieties.



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