



HOUSEPLANTS FOR OUR ENJOYMENT

Houseplants are good for our mental health. They help relieve some of our stress and anxiety, prolong attention span, and boost self-esteem. In addition, live plants have been shown to lower blood pressure in hospital patients. Studies have also shown that houseplants remove some toxins from the air and provide oxygen, though it would take an exceptionally large number of plants in most rooms to provide an appreciable effect.

SELECTION

When buying or sharing houseplants consider the following plant needs:

1. Light - from full sunlight to indirect light.
2. Humidity – many house plants are tropical and need moisture in the air.
3. Plant Condition – check for bugs and diseases.

CARE

Each family of plants has specific requirements (*see References & Resources*):

1. Acclimatizing - Does the plant need time to adjust to its new environment?
2. Container - Will the type of container material work for moisture retention, location, and decor?
3. Potting soil - Is the soil or mix appropriate for each plant's requirements?
4. Water – How much water does the plant need?

OVERWATERING IS THE #1 KILLER OF HOUSEPLANTS!

5. Fertilizer - Plants are living things and each has certain nutritional requirements. How much food does the plant need?

6. Light – Does the plant require bright, natural light from a southern window, morning or afternoon sun from an east/west window, or will artificial light be enough?
7. Repotting and propagation - When and how should you divide, repot, or propagate your plant?

HOUSEPLANT ENVIRONMENT

Overwatering – Check soil moisture with your finger or a soil moisture meter and water only if dry. After watering, drain any water in the catch tray from under the plant. Some plants do better when watered from below (let plant absorb for 30 minutes, then discard excess). If your plants need extra humidity, try putting them on a pebble and water filled tray, keeping the bottom of the pot above the water level. The evaporating water will add moisture for the leaves.

Grooming – Remove any dead or fallen leaves and flowers. Plants breathe through their leaves and get dusty over time, so shiny leaves can be cleaned with a water dampened clean cloth and fuzzy leaves can be dusted with a soft brush. Most plant leaves can also be washed with warm tap water in the sink, just be sure to dry the leaves before putting them back in sunlight to prevent burn marks on the leaves.

Summertime – Most, but not all, indoor plants thrive in our humid outside summer environment. Once night temperatures are over 50°, place plants in full to part shade to prevent leaf scorch, leaf loss, and protect from wind. Be sure to check and/or treat for pests and diseases before bringing them back indoors for the winter.

***“After your Amaryllis has bloomed,
remove the stem and keep plant in a
sunny window. If you plant the bulb
outside in a sheltered, sunny location, it
will re-bloom the next summer though
smaller than the original.”***

– Deb Bartok-Newton, GEMG

REFERENCES

Lohr, Virginia I. (2010). *What Are the Benefits of Plants Indoors and Why Do We Respond Positively to Them?* Department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture, Washington State University.

Niemiera, Alex X. (2018). *Indoor Plant Culture*. Virginia Cooperative Extension Publication 426-100.

Fooling Mother Nature: Forcing Bulbs for Indoor Bloom - Virginia Cooperative Extension Pub/Hort/Hort76

Plant Societies:

1. African Violets - African Violet Society of America - avsa.org
2. Gesneriads - Gesneriad Society - gesneriadsociety.org
3. Orchids - American Orchid Society - aos.org
4. Cactus & Succulents - Cactus & Succulent Society of America - cactusandsucculentsociety.org
5. Begonias - American Begonia Society - begonias.org
6. Bonsai - American Bonsai Society - absbonsai.org
7. Bromeliads - Bromeliad Society International - bsi.org
8. American Horticultural Society - ahsgardening.org
9. American Rose Society - rose.org

Other websites:

1. Houseplant411.com
2. Houseplantsexpert.com
3. Better Homes and Gardens - bhg.com/gardening/houseplants

Plant Identification Apps for Android and iOS:

1. PlantNet
2. LeafSnap
3. PlantSnap
4. Google Lens
5. Seek
6. iNaturalist
7. PictureThis
8. Flora Incognita
9. Pinterest

