

Growing Indoor Plants

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Growing indoor plants can be fun and rewarding, especially in winter. Not only do they brighten your space, but they can be a fun hobby. Studies show they can reduce stress, improve mental health, and even clean the air.

Many people have tried growing indoor plants and think they have a black thumb. But this is never the case. It is just a lack of knowledge where learning some simple steps can make your indoor plants thrive. Four key factors to making indoor plants thrive include providing sufficient light, keeping them away from heat/AC registers and cold draft doors, correctly watering, and choosing adaptable plants for your space.

Many houseplants cannot handle cold or warm, dry air for long periods. This can lead plants near these places to develop scorched leaf edges. Sometimes, entire leaves can dry out completely. Plants in areas with cold drafts can also dry out, wilt, or drop from the plant.

Plants should not be placed on a watering schedule until you figure out how often the soil dries out, especially at first. In the winter, plants need less water because of cooler temperatures and lower light. They are often happy being watered every 10 to 14 days. Another critical factor is to ensure excess water drains away from the pot. Ensure drainage holes are in the pot and allow excess water to drain into a sink or something similar. Standing water in the pot that does not drain away can lead to root rot, disease, or even pesky fungus gnats.

Since winter light levels are lower, their growth slows down, but they still need as much bright light as possible. Place your plants near a bright window—south—or west-facing is best. But keep them just off to the side to avoid direct sunlight, which can scorch tender leaves. Additionally, rotate the plants 180 degrees twice a month to keep the foliage growth symmetrical. Otherwise, the leaves will grow towards the window, making a lopsided plant.

Several easy-to-care-for indoor plants are great for beginners, including favorites like pothos, spider plants, and cast-iron plants. These have fantastic foliage and thrive in lower light from areas such as north—or east-facing windows or even under fluorescent light in office spaces. Dracaenas, heart-leaf philodendrons, and sansevierias are also great, low-maintenance options.

Some low-maintenance flowering indoor plants exist. One closely related group is the holiday cacti. They are divided into Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter Cacti. Depending on the species, they bloom around these holidays initially. Lower light levels and cooler temperatures cause flower bud formation, which is why they bloom in the winter and early spring. However, breeding among the species has created newer cultivars that more freely bloom throughout winter. Some may bloom year-round. The key to getting them to bloom freely is to place them within a few inches of large windows. The air temperature near these windows is often in the 50-degree range at night and causes flower bud formation.

Indoor plants don't have to be tricky! Follow these tips, choose the right plants, and watch your green thumb grow!