

# Houseplant Happiness

Scientific studies indicate that houseplants keep us healthy in multiple other ways including reduction in headaches, colds, sore throats and stress levels. Gardeners know that being in nature is good for our bodies, minds and spirits. Bringing the outdoors in during the dreary months is a health booster, improving creativity, cognitive skills, memory and problem solving. When you have the heat on, the plants also act as natural humidifiers relieving dried skin, chapped lips and discomfort.

My favorite indoor plants include the fiddle leaf fig for rooms with tall ceilings. In its native habitat of Africa the fiddle leaf will grow to 40 feet, but indoors it may reach 10 to 15 feet, living for three decades or more. For longevity of blooms, you cannot beat orchids or bromeliads. They need almost zero care yet flower for months on end. Another

constant bloomer with bright shiny green leaves is the peace lily. It tolerates all levels of light and abuse and brings tranquility to any room. Pothos has to be one of the easiest houseplants to grow. You can snip off a piece, stick it in soil, water, and let it do its thing. At this time of year, Christmas cactus are in full bloom. After the blossoms are spent, put them outside on a porch or patio until they bloom the following season. Azaleas in bloom can be put on patios, porches, and brought inside as accents for short periods of time. If you are looking for plants that only need an occasional spritzing, buy tillandsias, or air plants. They live on air, literally. Palms, anthuriums, ZZplants, and many more are all available at your local garden center.

If you think you have a brown thumb indoors, here is "the 101" on how to be a pro:



*Rich red Christmas cactus thrives indoors.*



*This spathiphyllum peace lily is over 25 years old!*

1. Before buying a plant, decide where you will want it to be placed. Is it sunny, dark, warm, or cold? Check plant tags for the information you'll need to keep your plant happy. My measuring trick for light is that if you can read a magazine in the space, the plant can grow in that low light.

2. Avoid putting any plants on or near radiators, air conditioners, TVs, or drafty areas.

3. Water only when the soil is dry an inch below the surface. Stick a pencil in the dirt and if it comes up dry, give your plant a drink. Don't over water. Yellowing and dropping leaves is usually a sign of too much moisture. Don't drown your plants or they will suffocate and die.

4. Always have a saucer under every pot and a protective element (a tile, coaster, CD disk, cork) under the saucer to prevent ruining furniture in the event of spills. Don't let plant containers sit in excess water.

5. Feed two or three times per year according to the plant tag directions.

6. Repot when root bound.

7. Enjoy clean air and a prettier interior with your houseplants.

Houseplants are happiest when



*Fiddle leaf figs are great for rooms with high ceilings. Leaves are bright, shiny, green.* Photos Cynthia Brian

temperatures are between 70 and 80 degrees Fahrenheit during the day and 10 to 15 degrees lower at night, but thrive in basically the same temperatures that make humans comfortable.

Don't wait to be successful. Just buy a few houseplants and breathe in nature 365 days a year inside your home and office.



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## ESTIMATING RISK OF TREE FAILURE

A primary goal of tree risk assessment is to provide information about the level of risk posed by a tree over a specific time period. This is accomplished by having a qualified arborist from Advance Tree Service determine the risks of failure. These two factors are determined by:

1. Evaluating the structure conditions that may lead to failure; the potential loads on the tree; and the trees' adaptations to weakness- to determine the likelihood of failure.
2. Assessing the targets' value and potential damage-to estimate the consequences of failure and the likelihood that a tree or branch could strike people or property.

So don't wait until it's too late, call your local Arborist at Advance Tree Service and Landscaping to help you assess your risk today.

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