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**ESPOMA'S TOTAL  
GUIDE *to* GROWING**  
*Houseplants*

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**ORGANIC**  
A natural in the garden since 1929

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Decorative flourish

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**BENEFITS OF**  
*Houseplants*

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Decorative flourish

# 7 BENEFITS OF Houseplants



## WHY HAVE HOUSEPLANTS?



# 1 HEALTH & WELLNESS *Benefits*

Houseplants can improve overall well-being. The simple presence of plants indoors can:



**Make us Smarter:** Memory increases by up to 20% and improvements with other cognitive skills like creative thinking, problem solving and spatial processing are documented in research.



**Lower your Stress & Anxiety:** Plants can improve our overall mood. There's a reason many people need to "step outside for fresh air."



**Tranquil Transport:** You know how nature always has a calming effect on your mind? Having plants indoors can induce the same effect.

*Click links for more info!*

[Plant care is a form of self-care](#)

[A plant a day keeps the doctor away](#)

THIS decrease in stress ALSO LEADS TO:



### **INCREASED SLEEP:**

Reduce stress and improve your mood. Think more clearly and do better in school and at work.



### **LOWER BLOOD PRESSURE:**

Helps avoid strokes, heart attacks, and other serious health problems.



### **IMPROVED PHYSICAL HEALTH:**

With improved sleep and less stress there is often a reduction in the number of headaches, coughs and sore throats = less sick days



### **BOOST PRODUCTIVITY LEVELS:**

A reduction in stress allows an increase in productivity and a better performance on tasks at hand. A cleaner, greener environment results in higher quality work.

## 2 IMPROVE *Air Quality*



Here are some ways plants improve our indoor air quality.

- ✓ **Indoor Plants Purify the Air:** NASA studies have shown that plants provide filtration and have the ability to remove harmful airborne toxins, pollutants and VOCs (Volatile Organic Compounds)
- ✓ **The More, the Merrier:** NASA recommends 15-18 houseplants within an 1800-square-foot house to improve the quality of air in your house.
- ✓ **Clear the Air:** Studies from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have found that levels of indoor air pollution can be two to five times higher, and in some cases 10 times more polluted—than outdoor air.
- ✓ **Healthier Home:** Houseplants, such as bromeliads, spider plants and dracaena, remove the harmful compounds frequently found in homes and offices, produced by cleaning supplies, paint, furniture glue and nail polish remover.

*Click links for more info!*  
[Easy, breezy houseplants that cool your home](#)

### 3 CREATE A *Natural Decor*



Plants add an element of natural beauty to indoor spaces.



Plants add a relaxed & natural feel to space as well as color and texture



Add some classic houseplants to your living room for everyone to enjoy



Houseplants are an inexpensive way to add to your home decor



Dress up your desk, make your bedroom a sanctuary, or gives your bathroom a spa-like feeling



Use plants and planters to display style



Decorate and make use of windowsills, vertical spaces, empty corners or even unused kitchen counter space



Add subtle touches with small plants or dramatic focal points with oversized foliage

## 4 CONNECT TO *Nature* ALL YEAR



Houseplants allow us to connect to nature all year long.



### **Houseplants allow us to bring nature inside:**

Studies suggest that being outside in nature has positive impacts on our health & happiness, but people can't always spend time outdoors or don't have access.



### **Houseplants allow people to connect with parts of nature:**

Despite their location or weather/climate or size of their space.



### **Avoid Nature Deficiency Disorder:**

Nature Deficiency Disorder is based on the idea that human beings, especially children, are spending less time outdoors, and the belief that this change results in a wide range of behavioral problems.



### **Avoid the “Winter Blues”:**

Having indoor plants during the cold, winter months can also help deter the “winter blues” often felt when we are stuck inside.



# 5 GROW Edibles & Medicinal Plants



Houseplants aren't just beautiful decor, they can also be useful home additions for everyday things:



**SKIP A LAST MINUTE TRIP TO THE STORE** for things like, fresh basil... grow your own instead!

Some **EASY TO GROW OPTIONS** for small kitchen gardens: micro-greens, herbs, tomatoes, lemons, chili peppers, avocados, or leafy greens like kale.

**GROW INDOOR KITCHEN GARDENS** all year and even in small spaces.



**GROW FRESH HERBS FOR COOKING** or for aromatherapy purposes.



**GROW PLANTS,** like Aloe, provide a natural remedy for burns, wrinkles and other skin conditions.

## 6 HOBBY FOR THE *Whole Family*



*Click links for more info!*  
[5 ways to get kids involved in gardening](#)

Having houseplants can be a rewarding and easy activity for anyone!



**Let little hands get dirty** planting and caring for plants



**Plants stimulate children's senses:** sight, smell and touch



Give everyone **a break from screen time**



**Kids can learn science** by starting seeds or planting cuttings



For adults caring for **plants requires less responsibility** vs. caring for a pet.

## 7 CONNECT WITH *Plant* COMMUNITY



Plant lovers have always gotten together to trade seeds, secrets and growing advice.

Now modern plant friends can find each other through social media platforms, online groups, plant swaps, garden clubs or local garden center workshops.



### **Shop Local:**

Find local plant shops or local social media groups

### **Have fun:**

Meet local and faraway plant friends

### **Be a Collector:**

Find collectors and rare plants

### **Connect & Share:**

Share, learn and connect with local & online plant communities

### **Be Inspired:**

Inspire others with your own plants and find inspiration from others

### **Learn & Grow:**

Participate in workshops or plant swaps

### **Get Social:**

Share your plants via social media like Instagram





CHOOSE YOUR  
**CHOOSING YOUR**  
*Houseplants*

# CHOOSE THE RIGHT *Plant* FOR YOU



## Before bringing it home:

- ✓ Pick the right plants for the right space
- ✓ Read the plant label
- ✓ Check the plant for signs of pests or distress



## Here are some factors to consider:

### **Skill level required:**

How easy are they to care for and are they considered beginner friendly plants?

### **Are they toxic?**

If you have pets & kids this may be something to consider in your plant selection process.

### **Maintenance required:**

How much care do they require and how much do you want to give? Consider if you need to care for them daily, weekly, monthly and what works best for your situation.

### **Light required:**

How much light do they need? Low, medium or bright-light? Consider how much light you have and where it comes from. Are you willing to buy grow lights for certain locations?

*Click links for more info!*

[5 plant suggestions to start your houseplant family](#)

[The top 5 low-light houseplants](#)

# BEGINNER *Houseplant* SUGGESTIONS



Photo courtesy of Costa Farms

1



2



Photo courtesy of Costa Farms

3



Photo courtesy of Costa Farms

4



Photo courtesy of Costa Farms

5

1. Golden Pothos
2. Succulents & Cacti
3. Peace Lily
4. Snake Plant
5. Spider Plant
6. ZZ Plant



Photo courtesy of Costa Farms

6

*Click links for more info!*

6 easy ways to grow succulents

# INTERMEDIATE & ADVANCED Houseplant SUGGESTIONS



1



Photo courtesy of Costa Farms

2

1. [Wandering Jew](#)
2. Boston Fern
3. [Fiddle-Leaf Fig](#)
4. Lemon Tree
5. African Violet
6. [Orchid](#)



3



4



5



6

*Click links for more info!*  
[More tips for choosing an orchid here](#)



# Picking & Potting

## YOUR CONTAINER





# HOW TO PICK A *Container*



Picking the right container can certainly enhance your decor, but it can also benefit the health of your plants.

### **Determine the Right Size:**

Increase pot size by 1 to 2 inches in diameter for plants that are growing in pots 10 inches in diameter or less. For larger plants, those growing in pots greater than 10 inches in diameter, increase the pot size by 2 or 3 inches in diameter.

### **Pick a Style That Suits You:**

Pick styles and colors that you love and want to have displayed in your space. Terracotta pots are often used because they are porous and oxygen can flow in and out, which is good for your house plant's health.

### **Allow for Proper Drainage:**

Always choose a pot with drainage holes, so as not to oversaturate the soil. Any excess water can freely drain out the bottom of the container, allowing oxygen to make its way to plant roots. You can also choose to add a drainage hole to a pot, just don't forget to add a tray under it to catch the water.

# WHICH Soil SHOULD I USE?




## POTTING SOIL VS GARDEN SOIL

### What's Different?

- ✓ Potting mix is different from outdoor soil
- ✓ It's best to use potting mix for indoor plants
- ✓ Pick a potting mix that gives your plant's roots the best balance of air, moisture and nutrition

### Standard Potting Mix is usually comprised of:

- ✓ Composted tree bark
- ✓ Sphagnum peat moss
- ✓ Vermiculite or perlite
- ✓ Can be many other additional ingredients in mixes



GOOD POTTING SOIL LETS ROOTS BREATHE, PROVIDES MOISTURE & NUTRITION



LOOK FOR A DARK, RICH MIX WITH FLECKS OF PERLITE

# WHAT IS A GOOD *Putting Mix?*



A good potting mix should offer the plant a balance of stability, nutrients, moisture and air.

A good potting mix should physically support the plant and supply adequate air and water to plant roots.

The mix should be light enough so that roots can move and grow within it, yet heavy enough to hold sufficient moisture and support the plant. A good mix should also have the proper pH, which in general is between 5.8 and 6.4 for most container plants.

Overall, a good potting mix should offer the plant stability, nutrients, moisture and air. **Special mixes** have been developed for different classes of plants like Cactus, Orchids, or African Violets.



## **Adding Amendments:**

Amendments can be used to lighten a heavy mix or allow for better aeration or drainage. Some potting mediums contain amendments, including fertilizers or additives that help retain moisture, such as **water-retaining crystals**. **Vermiculite and Perlite** are often added to mixes. **Horticultural charcoal** can also be used to improve potting mixes.

# WHY CHOOSE *Espoma*?



APPROVED FOR ORGANIC GARDENING



PROVIDES PROPER PH LEVEL

CONSISTENT, HIGH QUALITY BLENDS



NO SYNTHETICS OR CHEMICALS



ENHANCED WITH MYCO-TONE®

**Myco-tone®:** A proprietary blend of both endo and ectomycorrhizae, which have been proven to promote root growth, increase water uptake, and reduce drought stress and transplant shock.



FORTIFIED WITH WORM CASTINGS, ALFALFA MEAL, KELP MEAL AND FEATHER MEAL

Click links for more info!  
See our full line of specialty soil mixes here



HOW TO CARE FOR  
*Houseplants*

# HOW TO WATER *Houseplants*

To be the best plant parent that you can be, always check the care instructions before you water.

**If the soil feels dry, or you see wilted leaves, it's time to water your plants.**

## **All Plants Need Water:**

Understanding your plant's unique needs and preferences is key before you start watering them. Do some research on your plant or check any tags or care cards included with them to find out more about their needs.

## **How Much to Water:**

Not all plants need the same amount of water. Many popular houseplants come from tropical regions, like philodendrons, and will need more water versus plants from desert regions, like cacti and succulents, which prefer to dry out between waterings.

## **When to Water:**

The best way to check is to stick your finger about an inch into the soil. If it feels dry, it's time to water. If the soil feels damp, check again in a few days. If you notice less growth than usual, water less frequently until you see growth again. If the leaves are wilted, water your plant.

# ESSENTIAL *Houseplants* WATERING TIPS



*Click links for more info!*

For more info on watering,  
check out this video by  
[Homestead Brooklyn](#)



Did you know that your houseplants are more likely to die from too much water than too little?

Here are some essential watering tips to keep your houseplants surviving and thriving!

- ✓ Try to avoid over- watering or under- watering your plant.
- ✓ Room temperature water is best
- ✓ Water the soil, not the leaves.
- ✓ Water soil thoroughly and evenly
- ✓ The plant pot matters: does it have drainage? Drainage helps prevent roots from sitting in water.
- ✓ Different plants have different watering needs.
- ✓ Discard any excess water to avoid soggy soil and “wet feet.”
- ✓ Make a schedule so you remember when you last watered and when you need to tend to your plants again.

# WHEN TO *Fertilize* YOUR HOUSEPLANTS



**Granular fertilizers are typically designed for outdoor use (be aware, they may have an odor)**

In order for houseplants to thrive and grow, you'll need to fertilize them.

Plants extract nutrients from their soil and because potted plants are in a closed containers we need to supplement them with the nutrients they have lost over time.

**Plant food types:** Water soluble, controlled release and natural organics. It is important to choose the right type for indoor use. Liquid fertilizers are often best suited for indoor plants.

**Common fertilizers come in several different forms:** Liquids, sticks, tablets, granules, and slow-release granules. Specialty fertilizers, for plants like Orchids or African Violets, contain optimized proportions of these nutrients for specific plants.

**Most fertilizers will have (3) numbers on their package:**

**NPK RATIO:** These represent the available nutrients:

**N**

✓ **Nitrogen:** Encourages healthy foliage growth

**P**

✓ **Phosphorus:** Encourages bigger, healthier blooms

**K**

✓ **Potassium:** Encourages a strong root system



# WHAT MAKES A GOOD Fertilizer?

## What makes a good fertilizer?

A good fertilizer will contain the basic macro-nutrients (NPK) and also contain micro-nutrients. Always check the label and see what's in your fertilizer.

## Why Espoma Liquid Fertilizers?

### The Espoma Organic Liquid Fertilizers

are scientifically proven to grow bigger, better plants with larger blooms. These liquid concentrates contain natural proteins that are enhanced with kelp extracts, humic acids, and a proprietary set of beneficial microbes that provide maximum results.

*Click links for more info!*  
[See our full line of liquid fertilizers here](#)



# HOW TO Fertilize YOUR HOUSEPLANTS



**Make a schedule to remember when to feed your plants!**

Follow instructions on the label.

Pick your form of fertilizer and read the label for the instructions. If choosing a liquid, like our [Indoor!](#), follow these instructions:

**1. Feed every 2-4 weeks**

Make a schedule to remember when to feed your plants. Follow the instructions on the bottle.

**2. Shake well.**

Use ½ the cap (2 tsp) per every 1 quart of water.

**3. Mix into water**

**4. Thoroughly drench the soil of the plant.**

Ideally the water would flow through the container and some would run out of the bottom of the pot. Be sure to have a saucer to catch the runoff and remove any water from the saucer so the plant is not sitting in water.

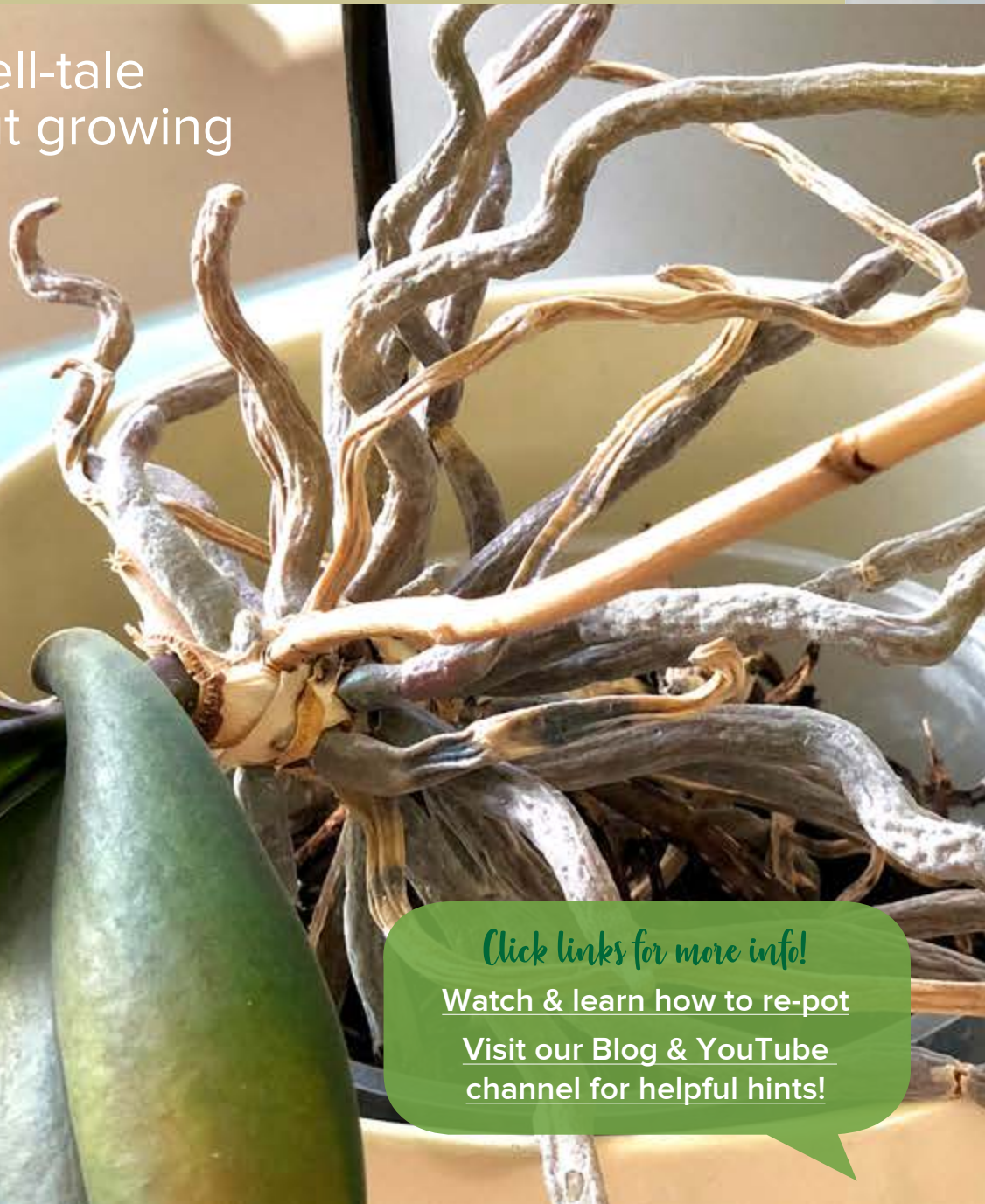


# HOW TO *Re-pot* HOUSEPLANTS



There are a few tell-tale signs a plant is out growing its container.

If you see a jumbled mess of roots, it is time to re-pot.



*Click links for more info!*

[Watch & learn how to re-pot](#)

[Visit our Blog & YouTube channel for helpful hints!](#)

**When should you re-pot?** If you see a jumbled mess of roots, matted roots near the surface, or roots coming out of the drain hole, it's time to re-pot.

**Massage the roots to loosen.** Remove the plant from its original container, and break up the tangled roots at the bottom.

**Go bigger when re-potting.** The new container should be 1 to 2 inches larger in diameter than the original. Be sure to leave about 1 inch between soil and pot lip.

**Don't forget the drainage.** Be sure your new container has drainage holes in the bottom to prevent excess water or rotting.

**Place the plant in its new container.** Add soil to the pot. Fill in around your plant with soil and pack in tightly. Don't plant too deep. Only fill in soil to the level at which the old soil is packed.

**Sprinkle with water.** To finish it off, water it lightly and, voila! You have a re-potted houseplant.



# HOW TO AVOID *Houseplant* PROBLEMS



## COMMON ISSUES:



Are your plants trying to tell you something?

Catching them early is your best chance of saving your houseplants.



AVOID THESE ON YOUR JOURNEY TO HEALTHY HOUSEPLANTS!

May be a watering issue, low humidity or too much salt in your water.

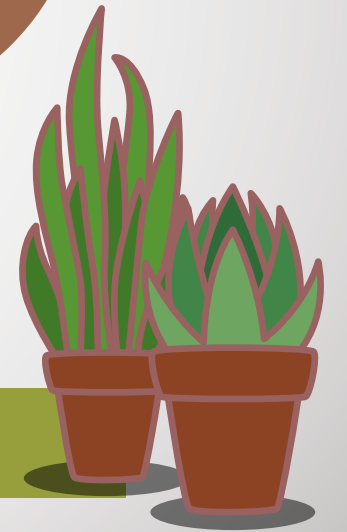


Look closer: It may be a sign of insects



Click links for more info!  
Look for signs that your plant is in trouble

Air is too dry



# REASONS FOR Pruning

Indoor plants tend to need a lot less pruning versus outdoor plants. However, you may still need to do some pruning.

## REASONS TO PRUNE:

**ENCOURAGE** growth in a balanced pattern.

**PREVENT** plants from growing too large or out of control.

## WHEN TO PRUNE:

At the beginning of the growing season which is usually late winter/early spring. The typical rule of thumb is to prune after they have finished flowering.

**TOOLS:** Gloves and pruning shears or kitchen scissors



# HOW TO PRUNE *Houseplants*



**Do not prune Palms, Norfolk Island Pines and several types of Orchids.**



If your indoor houseplants are looking a little like your hair during quarantine, it might be time to prune your indoor garden.

## **Directions for pruning your houseplants:**

- ✓ **Observe the plant.** Check the shape/structure, look for dead areas or disease, also check for new growth.
- ✓ **Gather any tools needed.**
- ✓ **Remove dead matter.** Clip or pinch off dead leaves and stems. Pull out rotted stems.
- ✓ **Deadhead the plant.** For a flowering houseplant, remove old flowers by pinching them off or clipping them back to the stem.
- ✓ **Make cuttings.** Make cuts to encourage new growth. Cut the area right before the leaf node. Do not remove more than 25% of the plant.
- ✓ **Houseplant cuttings can be saved.** Allow them to root in a cup of water and then plant to form new houseplants.
- ✓ **Succulent clippings.** Clippings can be propagated by planting them directly soil.



RESOURCES FOR  
*Houseplants*

# LEARN MORE ABOUT Houseplants

## AMBASSADORS:

✓ [How's It Growing NJ](#) ✓ [Garden Obsessions](#)

## PARTNERS:



Summer Rayne Oakes

✓ [Homestead Brooklyn](#)



Laura LeBoutillier

✓ [Garden Answer](#)



Kevin Espiritu

✓ [Epic Gardening](#)



Maria Failla

✓ [Bloom & Grow Radio](#)

Follow Espoma Organic® on our social channels, and visit us at [espoma.com](http://espoma.com) and our [blog](#) for product suggestions, videos, and more!





# SUGGESTED *Products*



These products will help your houseplants thrive!



## SUGGESTED PRODUCTS:

- ✓ Indoor Liquid Fertilizers
- ✓ Potting Mixes