



Growing Guru



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HOUSEPLANTS



The houseplants that are the easiest to grow are ones that can withstand low light, don't require a lot of watering, and can stay in the same pot for years (sometimes decades!). My oldest houseplants, which haven't been repotted in ages, include *Diffenbachia* (dumbcane), Norfolk Island pine (*Araucaria heterophylla*), snake plant (*Sansevieria/Dracaena*), donkey tails (*Sedum morganianum*), panda plant (*Kalanchoe tomentosa*), and crown of thorns (*Euphorbia milii*).

Choose sturdy interesting pots for displaying your houseplants. Notice how Good Housekeeping and Forbes display the hard-to-kill houseplants that they recommend.

One feature of many houseplants that makes them perfect for inside environments is their leaf surfaces have a thick layer of wax, which keeps them from drying out. Rubber tree plant and snake plant are great examples.

If you forget to water often enough, you might "by accident" cause plants to produce a flower stalk, as in my aloe vera. The same has also happened to me twice with snake plant, and the joy is discovering it by its fragrance.



Succulents are also excellent in storing water in their plump leaves, such as my donkey tails on my kitchen windowsill.



Most of my houseplants are placed outside under a tree during the growing season, where I water as needed. It is, of course, important to bring them back inside before temperatures get too cold, because most houseplants are warm weather species from around the world.

Houseplants don't have to be just interesting green or variegated leaves, although many are. Some can provide a lovely fragrance, like jasmine or Cuban oregano. Some are regular or even perpetual bloomers, like Crown of Thorns. Better Homes & Gardens, House Beautiful, and HortZone illustrate some excellent indoor blooming plants.

Almost all my house plants were gifts or propagated from other plants, so they didn't cost me anything. However, some people are willing to spend thousands on expensive house plants.