



Twelve Effortless Houseplants

Turning a home or office into a lush, green space means getting to know the basic needs of each of your plants. Finding the right spot for each one will help you keep them healthy and happy. Success with a few of these easy, enjoyable houseplants may lead you to more challenging choices and, before you know it, you will have a green thumb! Here are a dozen of our favorites:

***Chlorophytum comosum* – Spider Plant or Airplane Plant**

Light: Bright, indirect light; no direct sun Temperature: Average: 65° - 75° must be above 50°
Moisture: Consistently moist Fertilization: Once every two weeks at ½ strength from spring through summer only; nothing in fall and winter
Humidity: Moderate humidity
Notes: Vigorous and fast-growing; sensitive to fluoride which causes brown leaf tips; flowers and produces plantlets best when rootbound; plantlets will root into soil in 2-3 weeks and then can be severed from mother plant

***Crassula ovata* – Jade Plant**

Light: Bright, indirect light to some sun Temperature: Low to average: 60° - 75°
Moisture: Let dry somewhat before watering Fertilization: Cactus fertilizer; once a month at ½ strength from through fall only; nothing in winter
Humidity: Can take dry air
Notes: Needs a heavy pot, tends to be top-heavy; watch for mealy bugs; slow-growing, rarely needs repotting

***Dieffenbachia hybrids* – Dumb Cane**

Light: Bright, indirect light; no direct sun Temperature: Average: 65° - 75°
Moisture: Let dry somewhat before watering Fertilization: Once every two weeks at ½ strength from spring through summer; once a month in fall and winter
Humidity: Average room humidity
Notes: Top-prune if it gets too tall, new growth will sprout where it was cut; these cuttings root easily as do the “pups” at the base of the plant; poisonous, keep away from pets; irritating sap, wear gloves when pruning

***Fittonia verschaffeltii* – Nerve Plant**

Light: Low to medium light; no direct sun Temperature: Average: 65° - 75°
Moisture: Consistently moist Fertilization: Every other month from spring through fall only; nothing in winter
Humidity: High humidity; likes misting
Notes: Grows well in fluorescent light; plant collapses if it dries out; direct sun makes leaves shrivel; yellow leaves indicate over-watering; pinch stem tips regularly to keep plant bushy and full; great terrarium plant

***Hypoestes phyllostachya* – Polka-Dot Plant**

Light: Bright, indirect light; no direct sun Temperature: Average to warm: 65° - 80°
Moisture: Consistently moist; drier in winter Fertilization: Once every two weeks at ½ strength from spring through fall only; nothing in winter
Humidity: Average room humidity
Notes: Loses variegation in low light; scorches in direct sun; pinch back to promote branching; great terrarium plant

***Ficus elastica* – Rubber Plant**

Light: Bright, indirect light; no direct sun Temperature: Average: 65° - 75°
Moisture: Consistently moist Fertilization: Once a month at ½ strength from spring through
Humidity: Average room humidity summer only; nothing in fall and winter
Notes: Keep away from drafts; somewhat sensitive to change; wipe leaves often to remove dust and sooty mold; watch for scale insects; prune regularly to promote branching and control height; repot only when it becomes root-bound

***Pachira aquatica* – Money Tree Plant**

Light: Bright, indirect light; no direct sun Temperature: Low to average: 60° - 75°
Moisture: Let dry completely before watering Fertilization: Once every two weeks at ½ strength from spring
Humidity: Moderate to high humidity through summer only; nothing in fall and winter
Notes: Grows well in fluorescent light; water thoroughly but avoid getting water on trunk; keep away from dry air and drafts; somewhat sensitive to changes in location; likes a small pot, may be grown as a bonsai

***Philodendron* spp. – Climbing/Trailing or Tree types**

Light: Medium to bright light; no direct sun Temperature: Low to average: 60° - 75°
Moisture: Consistently moist; drier in winter Fertilization: Once a month at ½ strength from spring through
Humidity: Moderate humidity fall only; nothing in winter
Notes: Yellow leaves indicate over-watering; wipe leaves often to remove dust; pinch out trailing types close to node to promote branching - take stem tip cuttings in spring, roots easily in water or moist soil; propagate tree types by division

***Peperomia caperata* – Peperomia**

Light: Low to bright light; no direct sun Temperature: Average: 65° - 75°
Moisture: Let dry somewhat before watering Fertilization: Once a month at ½ strength from spring
Humidity: Average room humidity through fall only; nothing in winter
Notes: Can take fluorescent light; do not overwater; may flower in late summer; keep rootbound, rarely needs repotting

***Sansevieria trifasciata* – Snake Plant or Mother-in-law's Tongue**

Light: Low light to direct sun Temperature: Low to average: 60° - 75°
Moisture: Let dry completely before watering Fertilization: Cactus fertilizer; once a month from spring
Humidity: Average room humidity through fall only; nothing in winter
Notes: Slow-growing; tends to be top-heavy, use a heavy container or cache-pot; watering center of leaf rosette may cause rot; wipe leaves often to remove dust; easy to divide; repot in spring only when division becomes necessary

***Syngonium podophyllum* – Arrowhead Plant**

Light: Bright, indirect light; no direct sun Temperature: Low to average: 60° - 75°
Moisture: Let dry somewhat before watering Fertilization: Once every two weeks at ½ strength from spring
Humidity: Average room humidity through fall only; once a month in winter
Notes: Sensitive to chemicals, pesticides and pollutants; prune out older, climbing stems to keep plant bushy; these cuttings will root easily; repot in spring only when it has outgrown its pot; sap is toxic to pets and a skin irritant

***Zamioculcas zamiifolia* – ZZ Plant**

Light: Low light to direct sun Temperature: Low to average: 60° - 75°
Moisture: Let dry completely before watering Fertilization: Four times a year, spring/summer/fall/winter
Humidity: Average room humidity at ½ strength
Notes: No pest problems but may need dusting; occasionally produces a small flower; slow growing; keep rootbound, rarely needs repotting; divide rhizomes to propagate; all parts are poisonous