



EASY CARE HOUSEPLANTS

Information provided by Little Red Nursery
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There are many chemicals that can cause indoor pollution. Paper products, detergents, aerosols, carpet spot removers, vinyl furniture, synthetic carpeting, just to name a few! As a rule of thumb, one houseplant is recommended for every 10 square yards of floor space in your home or workplace. Thus, if your living room is 12' x 15', the decor should include at least 2 houseplants.

1. **Cast Iron Plant** (*Aspidistra elatior*) Earned its name by growing under the worst of conditions, even outdoors in deep shade. Prefers low light. Grows in a clump. Leaves are sword-like, pointed, about 4" wide and 2' long. Occasionally flowers indoors. A variegated version is available with white stripes. (USDA Zones 7 -9)
2. **Christmas Cactus** (*Zygocactus* or *Schlumbergera*) A trailing member of the cactus family that produces deep pink/red flowers in early winter. Seems to do its best when ignored. Can handle low light, but you'll get more flowers in bright light. Pruning after blooming will keep the plant bushy. You can force your Christmas cactus to bloom in December by keeping it in complete darkness for 12 hours a night, beginning in about mid-October, until buds appear. An even easier method is to subject it to cool temperatures (50-55 degrees F.) starting in November. Just leave it on a windowsill at home while the heat is off, because you're at work. (USDA Zones 9 -11)
3. **Dragon Tree** (*Dracaena marginata*) & **Lucky Bamboo** (*Dracaena sanerian*) *Dracaena* have long been the centerpiece of container plantings. Street plantings in town across America feature one spikey *dracaena* stuck in the center of red blooming geraniums in a half whiskey barrel. But there is actually a good amount of variety in *dracaena* and most make excellent, easy care houseplants. In particular, Dragon Tree which resembles a small palm tree and can reach heights of 10 ft and Lucky Bamboo, which isn't bamboo at all. Both have stems that can be trained to bend or spiral and stems that are topped by clusters of slender arching leaves with narrow purple margins. They grow best in bright light and if allowed to dry out between waterings. Even if allowed to wilt, *Dracaena* will spring back after watering, although the leaf tips may turn brown. Will tolerate low light. Lucky bamboo is often grown in water, but once substantial roots have formed, it is happier planted in soil. (USDA Zones 10 - 11)

4. **Mother-in-Law's Tongue** or **Snake Plant** or **Bird's Nest Plant** (*Sansevieria*) Called Mother-in-Law's Tongue because of its long, sharp, pointed leaves and because it never leaves. These are long-lived, easy care houseplants. Very tolerant of low light. Water sparingly or it will rot. Only 1-2 waterings are necessary indoors during the winter, depending on the humidity. Variegated forms need more light and can be more difficult to grow. There is also a dwarf variety, *Sansevieria trifasciata* "Hahnii", called Bird's News. (USDA Zones 10+)

5. **Pothos** (*Epipremnum*) One of the easiest houseplants to grow; almost impossible to kill. Trailing plants that just keep on growing, 10+ feet. Pruning the plants will keep them fuller at the base and each cutting can be rooted in water to create more plants. Pothos like to dry out between waterings, but if left to dry out too long, leaves will wilt and eventually dry and fall. Very tolerant of all types of light conditions, even artificial office lights. You can let them trail down or secure them to a trellis. There are many variegated and golden varieties available. (USDA Zones 11+)

6. **Spider Plant** (*Chlorophytum comosum*) Spider plants just keep on giving. You almost never see a spider plant that doesn't have babies attached. Often grown in hanging baskets, spider plants will get 2 to 2 1/2' wide and 2 to 3' long. Their roots tend to fill a pot, so repotting may be necessary every couple of years. When dangling babies start to form roots, they can be cut off and planted on their own. (USDA Zones 9-11)

Some More Easy Care Houseplants to Try:

African Violet (*Saintpaulia*)
 Aloe (*Aloe*)
 Cacti (*Cactaceae*)
 Chinese Evergreen (*Aglaonema commutatum*)
 Croton (*Codiaeum variegatum*)
 Dracaena (*Deremensis*) 'Warneckii'
 Dumb Cane (*Dieffenbachia*)
 Ferns (*Pteridophyta*)
 Ivy (*Araliaceae*)
 Jade Plant (*Crassula ovata*)
 Parlor Palm (*Chamaedorea elegans*)
 Peace Lily (*Spathiphyllum*)
 Ponytail Palm (*Nolina recurvata*)
 Prayer Plant (*Maranta*)
 Rubber Tree (*Ficus elastica*)
 Zanzibar Gem / ZZ Plant (*Zamioculcas zamiifolia*)

It is true that all of these plants are low-maintenance, but that does not mean you can totally neglect them. You still have to provide the best possible environment for them to grow.