



# *Chinese Money Plant*

## *(Pilea Peperomioides)*



**ABOUT THE MONEY PLANT:** The Chinese money plant, also known as the missionary plant, lefse plant, pancake plant, UFO plant, or just pilea (short for its scientific name of *Pilea peperomioides*) is originally from the southwestern Yunnan province of China. Popular lore maintains that a Norwegian missionary, Agnar Espregen, took cuttings home with him in the 1940s, and shared them with friends and family. Those plants were spread throughout Scandinavia, and eventually the world, as people passed cutting between friends.

**WHERE TO GROW:** Light-wise, the best situation for a Chinese money plant is bright light, with no direct sunlight. Direct sun scorches leaves, and light shade may encourage larger leaves. They're said to be hardy down to freezing, and a period of cool temperatures may make them more likely to produce their tiny white flowers on pink stems.

**CARE AND MAINTENANCE:** The Chinese money plant prefers a well-draining potting soil, and a pot with drainage holes is necessary. The soil needs to mostly dry out between waterings, with more watering required in warmer, sunnier weather. If the leaves start to look slightly droopy, that's a sign that the plant needs water. To keep your Chinese money plant nicely shaped, rotate it at least once a week to prevent it from getting lopsided. The large leaves tend to accumulate dust, so these plants benefit from regular showers, or at least wiping down their leaves. Treat monthly with an all-purpose plant fertilizer during the spring and summer growing seasons. You may also want to put your plant outdoors as temperatures warm, but, again, take care to keep it out of direct sunlight.

**HOW TO PROPAGATE:** Part of the reason that this plant has spread so far without being widely sold commercially is that it is fairly easy to propagate. A happy plant will eventually send plantlets up through the soil, which you can separate from the mother plant. Follow the stem about an inch under the soil, and use a clean, sharp knife to cut the baby plant free. Plant in a new pot and keep the soil moist until the plant is well-anchored and begins to produce new leaves. New plantlets also grow straight from the stem, and you can cut these free, place in water until roots develop in a week or two, and then follow the same directions as above. Learn to do it yourself, then spread the wealth!

