

Common House Plants

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Commonly Grown House Plants: Flowering Plants

Amaryllis-tolerates average house temps and likes bright to full sun. Easy to get to rebloom the following year. After flowers are finished, fertilize until Sept. or Oct. Continue to water as long as the foliage is growing. Place pots outside once temperatures have warmed up in late spring in bright light. Fertilize along with regular containers. Just before freezing start to acclimate pots to indoors. May send up new spikes before foliage dies. Will often revert to their own flowering schedule so may flower any month. Once foliage dies allow to rest in a dark cool spot for 8 weeks or more, repot and keep just moist until new growth appears.

African Violets-likes average to warm temps and bright light. Enjoys early morning sun. Needs bright light to flower. Can flower continuously if it likes its environments. Does well under fluorescents. Keep moist. Fertilize year round if continues to actively grow and flower. Often has new plants emerging off the stem. Divide the new plants so each has roots and repot. Lower leaves will die off leaving a long ugly stem. Repot up to the leaves.

Best left indoors year round. Remarkably pest free.

Azalea-likes average to cool temperatures especially at night. Does well in bright indirect light inside and shade outside. Needs to remain moist but not saturated. Place outside in a shady protected spot for the summer. Start to fertilize when nights become cooler. Bring in before frosts, reduce watering and place in cool room or greenhouse for 1-2 months to induce flowering. Do not fertilize when flowering. Can be long lived with proper care.

Rex Begonias-grown for their beautifully coloured and patterned leaves. Likes an average to warm environment in bright indirect light to partial shade outdoors (morning sun). Soil likes to be moist but not wet. Fertilize while actively growing. May slow down in winter so should decrease watering until new growth appears. Can be propagated by leaf cuttings or by rhizome cuttings. Can be long lived. Place in a protected shady spot for summer once temps have warmed up.

Bromeliads- are a wide variety of plants grown for their interesting foliage and unusual flowers. Tolerates a wide variety of temperatures and light conditions but not direct sun. Does well in low light conditions but might not flower. Allow soil to dry out between watering but keep vase filled with water. Fertilize soil lightly when actively growing never in the vase. After flowering the mother plant will produce babies. The mother plant will die eventually. Gently break off the offshoots and pot up for replacements. Most will flower naturally once they reach maturity but can speed the process up by placing plant in a plastic bag (cup empty of water) with an apple. The ethylene gas given off by the apple will induce flowering. Place outside in indirect light for the summer keeping well watered. Acclimate back inside before temperatures get too cool (7C) to keep actively growing.

Cyclamens-popular flowering houseplants that require cool growing conditions to continue flowering.

They enjoy indirect light, no direct sun.

Placed on a cool north-facing windowsill they will flower all winter. Fertilize while flowering and continue until foliage starts to die back. Can go outside as soon as temperatures are above zero. Quite cold tolerant. Will go dormant in summer. Let rest completely dry. The larger plants produce a tuber that should be removed and repotted. Water well and resume fertilizing every few weeks once new growth starts later in summer. In fall, when temps are cooler plants will start to flower again.

Coleus-easily propagated from summer flowering plants by placing stems in a glass of water. Will quickly develop roots which be potted up into average potting soil. Likes bright light with no direct sun. As it is an annual will need to take cuttings as the plants get leggy and start to flower which spells imminent death. Is not cold tolerant so wait until temperatures have really warmed up before placing outside. Pinch tips to keep bushy and tidy.

Hibiscus-grows into large bushes but can be trained into a standard. Requires warm temps with cooler nights in full to bright sun. Can be placed outside in summer once temps have warmed up in sheltered spot. Keep moist. Fertilize regularly when actively growing. May rest in winter so decrease watering until resumes growth. Tolerates heavy pruning to keep its shape. Susceptible to spider mites and aphids.

Lipstick and Goldfish Plant-both are very attractive when grown as vines. Will flower almost continually if plant is happy. Grows best in high light, will tolerate lower light levels but won't flower as profusely. Likes moist soil and lots of humidity. Fertilize monthly after flowering and while growing vigorously. Pruning needs differ: Lipstick needs new shoots pinched to keep compact and bushy while goldfish plants do not like pruning.

Orchids-several types are easy indoors. Most require moss or fir bark to grow in as are epiphytes. Submerge pot so is completely saturated. Never allow to sit in water

Phalaenopsis-many hybrids in pinks, white, purples, yellows and striped. Likes bright indirect light with a little morning sun in winter. Allow to dry out before watering. Warm temps with cool nights. Will flower all season if happy. Fertilize monthly with dilute fertilizer. Flowers can last for months and will often form new flowering spikes from nodes of original flower stem. Likes to spend the summers outdoors in warm bright area out of direct sun.

Cymbidium-large plant with long blades. Likes very bright light and will tolerate sun outside in summer (not midday). Needs cool nights to set its flower spikes. Long lasting spikes. Fertilize during summer and fall but not during winter rest period. Decrease watering during semi rest period in winter.

Dendrobium-spikes of small flowers. Often called dancing ladies. Most do well in bright light, average temperatures with cooler nights to trigger flowering in spring. Requires semi-dry winter rest. Fertilize when in active growth.

Oncidium-similar to dendrobiums

Christmas cactus-Easy to reflower. Likes shady to bright light with cool to average temperatures. After flowering allow plant to take a rest so withhold water but don't let joints shrivel. In early spring resume watering but allow to dry completely. Can be placed outside in a protected shady spot. Bring indoors before frost. Is daylength sensitive so requires a period of darkness and dryness to set its flower buds. Once buds are set be careful moving it as

resents movement and will drop its buds. Fertilize during the summer and keep potbound for best flowering.

Commonly Grown Non-Flowering Houseplants

Cactus and Succulents-huge variety of shapes, sizes and growth habits that do very well in the average house provided there is adequate light. Even in less than ideal light conditions if the temperatures are cool enough they will become dormant but still look great. Water sparingly in winter, (once a month) and no fertilizing. As a group these plants require very little fertilization, They need well draining soil so add grit, perlite to improve drainage. Will do well outside once temps have warmed up and have been acclimated to stronger light. Water weekly in summer. Do not tolerate cool temps. Minimum of 7C is borderline for ones like Echeverias. Easily propagated with a leaf or stem cutting or by division of pups. Need to callous before potting up. Will grow roots over time so don't water until new roots seen.

Croton-a beautiful foliage plant with multicolored large leaves. Needs sun to maintain its color. Must not be allowed to dry out or leaves wilt dramatically. Requires moderate to high humidity. Dislikes being potbound but plant on only into the next size pot. Can be grown outdoors if acclimated first. Susceptible to aphids, mealybugs and spider mites so regular spraying keeps the pests away.

Dieffenbachia-commonly grown in houses. Likes semi-shaded spots in average temps. While it tolerates

low humidity it does better with moderate humidity and moist soil. Often grows to be tall and lanky. Can be hacked back drastically and will respond with new growth. The sap from this plant contains strychnine which can burn skin and poison on ingestion.

Draceana-tall, spiky plants that are incredibly tolerant of indoor conditions. Will do well even in the shadiest corner but will lose its red edge on the leaves. Tricolor has pink, cream and red long narrow leaves. Water only when soil is dry. Enjoys an occasional bath to wash away dust Likes bright light without direct sun. Tends to lose its bottom leaves as it gets taller. Can be placed outdoors in a bright protected spot in summer.

Ferns-are a wide variety of ferns available that do well indoors. Most require moderate to high humidity so make good plants for the bathroom or kitchen. Cool to average temps are best and soil should be not allowed to dry out. Like a humousy potting soil. Most are tolerant of indirect light but do best in bright light without direct sun. May be moved outdoors in summer in a protected shady spot.

Ficus-very common small tree that is easily grown indoors. Tolerates bright light and average temps. Keep soil moist during the growing season and keep on the dry side during the winter. Dislikes being moved and responds with a leaf drop but will recover. Can get very large but its size is easily controlled with pruning. Fertilize monthly during growing season.

Jade Plant-easily grown succulent small tree. Old specimens have interesting bonsai-like shapes. Needs full sun but will do well in artificial light. Water sparingly throughout the summer but withhold water in winter. Keep cool in winter but average in other seasons. Roots easily from stem cuttings allowed to callous and placed in sand. Dislikes humidity. Low temperatures in winter encourage it to send out clusters of small white flowers. Does well outdoors in summer.

Norfolk Island Pine- frequently sold as an indoor Christmas tree but difficult to grow well indoors. Requires bright light out of direct sun and cool to average temperatures. Likes to be kept on the moist side with moderate to high humidity. Relatively slow growing so can be kept for years. Often drops its lower branches. Don't handle foliage.

Spider Plant- an easy and adaptable little plant. Produces many babies that can easily be cut off and rooted in a glass of water. Grows well in sun and shade and tolerates dry indoor air but appreciates an occasional bath. Cool to average temps with soil kept moist. Tips often turn brown which is caused by low humidity and/or chemicals in the water. Does well in outdoor container planters.

Sanseveria- indestructible houseplant. Several kinds but all have long lance-shaped leaves often with bars of pale green or bright yellow. Has been shown to clean the air of toxins. Likes to grow in moderately cool to warm temps in bright light but tolerates darker corners. Less light decreases color intensity. Likes to be dry between watering. Soil should be well drained. Can placed outdoors in bright indirect light in summer.