



LOW MAINTENANCE HOUSEPLANTS FOR LOW LIGHT SITUATIONS



LOW LIGHT - LOW MAINTENANCE INDOOR PLANTS

BENEFITS OF INCLUDING HOUSEPLANTS

- Reduce stress, elevate mood
 - **Add Indoor Plants to Your Gardening Regime**
- Purify air
 - **Interior Landscape Plants for Indoor Air Pollution Abatement**
 - NASA study indicating plants that help remove toxins from the air

TOXICITY INFORMATION

- For pets
 - ASPCA.org
- For people
 - **Handbook of Poisonous and Injurious Plants** from University of North Carolina
 - **Pet Friendly Indoor Gardening**

WHAT IS LOW MAINTENANCE?

- Plants that fit your gardening style
 - Benign neglect
 - Any requiring a bit more TLC will be the exception
- Low maintenance plants are forgiving of:
 - Stretching watering a bit further than preferred
 - Tolerant of normal home conditions
 - Low humidity
 - Normal room temperature

WHAT IS LOW LIGHT?

- **Lighting Indoor Houseplants**
- Low to moderate light
 - Able to read without too much strain
 - Back from or to the side of an east- or west-facing window
 - In front of a north window

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Healthy Garden, Healthy Life

Our family of products include Wool Pellets an organic innovative product to help your plants stay hydrated during the hot summer months. Wool Pellets also improve soil health and help your plants grow. Use Wool Pellets and enjoy this summer's vacation.

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- Bright, indirect light
 - Plants in NE or NW window
 - Some direct light in the morning or afternoon
 - Bright the rest of the day
- Bright light
 - Plants near an east- or west-facing window
 - 2 to 4 hours of direct sun
 - No direct midday sun
 - Back from south-facing window (except in winter in north)
- Direct sunlight
 - 4 to 5 hours of direct sunlight
 - Northern gardeners move plants to south-facing window in winter

BOOSTING THE LIGHT

- Swapping plants between high and low light conditions
 - Switch plant every 2 weeks from low to high light locations
- Artificial lights
 - **Selecting Artificial Lights for Indoor Gardens**
 - Incandescent
 - Produces heat, not energy efficient
 - Heavy in the red wavelengths - good for flowering
 - Very little blue wavelengths for leaf and stem growth
 - Incandescent plant lights (built and sold as such) direct heat away from plants
 - Still light on the blue wavelengths
 - Fluorescent
 - More energy efficient than incandescent
 - Some blue and red light
 - ▶ Use one cool and one warm fluorescent
 - ▶ Use plant or full spectrum fluorescent
 - Light intensity diminishes quickly the further from the plant
 - ▶ Problem for tall plants - bottom not well lit
 - ✓ Set on reflective surface
 - ✓ Light from the side
 - T-5 and compact fluorescent can be more energy efficient
 - Proper disposal concerns



About Melinda

Nationally known gardening expert, TV/radio host, author & columnist Melinda Myers has over 30 years of horticulture experience and has written over 20 gardening books, including *Can't Miss Small Space Gardening*, the *Midwest Gardener's Handbook*, and Jackson and Perkins' *Beautiful Roses Made Easy*. She hosts the nationally-syndicated "Melinda's Garden Moment" program airing on over 115 TV and radio stations throughout the U.S. Melinda also hosts the internationally distributed Great Courses "How to Grow Anything" DVD series, including the latest *Food Gardening for Everyone* DVD set. She is a columnist and contributing editor for *Birds & Blooms* magazine, writes the twice monthly "Gardeners' Questions" newspaper column and a nationally-distributed gardening column. She appears regularly as a guest expert on national and local television and radio shows.

Visit Melinda's website,
melindamyers.com

- LED lights (Light Emitting Diodes)
 - More energy efficient - produces less heat
 - Each individual diode emits a color
 - Grow lights (built and sold as such) have an array of different colors to mimic sunlight

WATER

- Don't overcompensate low light with more frequent watering
- Low light locations mean plants are not growing as rapidly and usually don't require as frequent watering as those growing in bright light
- The warmer you keep your house, the lower the humidity and faster the potting mix will dry
 - **Knowing When to Water Houseplants**
- The larger the pot, the more potting mix and usually needs less frequent watering

POTTING MIX

- **Selecting the Best Potting Mix**
- **Potting Soil and Houseplants**
- No real guidelines - whatever it says on the bag has to be true
- Organic - OMRI Certified
- The mixture influences how quickly the potting mix will dry
- Those with compost and coir tend to stay wet longer
- Once peat moss dries out, it can be hard to rewet

A FEW LOW LIGHT PLANTS

PHILODENDRON

- **Easy Care Philodendron**
- Water when top few inches of soil starting to dry
- Do not overwater
- Avoid cool temperatures
- Loses variegation - too little light
- Increase density
 - Pinch out growing tip to encourage branching
 - Prune long, leggy stems
 - Add cuttings to container

UPCOMING WEBINARS

February 3rd

Organic Control for Houseplant Pests

February 10th

Getting Started Growing Vegetable & Flower Gardens

February 17th

Growing Nutritious and Flavorful Edibles Indoors

February 24th

Low Maintenance Gardening for Loads of Beauty & Health Benefits

February 27th

Creating a Private Space: Design Strategies for Screening, Privacy and More

March 3rd

10 Ways to Spice Up Your Garden with Summer-Blooming Bulbs

- **Lots of varieties:**

- **Heartleaf philodendron** (*Philodendron hederaceum*)
 - Brasil - narrow, creamy green stripe down middle of leaves
 - Neon - bright chartreuse leaves
- *Philodendron* 'Autumn' - upright 2 to 3'
- *Philodendron* x 'Hope' - non-vining
- *Philodendron gloriosum* - large velvety leaves
- Split leaf philodendron (*Philodendron bipinnatifidum* 'Shangri-La') - dwarf split leaf
- Toxic to cats and dogs
- Human toxicity - leaves contain calcium oxalate crystals
 - Causes burning of lips, tongue and mouth

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MONSTERA (*Monstera deliciosa*)

- Often misidentified as a philodendron
- In native habitat, forms large edible fruits, thus the *deliciosa*
- Climber - aerial roots attach to rough support
- Light - prefers a bit more light than philodendron
- Warm location
- Allow top inch or two of soil to dry before watering
- Toxic to cats and dogs
- Human toxicity - leaves contain raphides (water insoluble calcium oxalate) and unverified proteinaceous toxins
 - Causes burning of lips, tongue and month
- Spadix and fruit are edible

POTHOS (*Epipremnum aureum* formerly *Pothos aureus*)

• **Pothos Audio Tip**

- Water when top few inches of soil starting to dry
- Do not overwater
- Prefers 60° to 80°
- Loses variegation - too little light
- See philodendron for tips on improving appearance
- Varieties:
 - *Epipremnum aureum* 'Marble Queen'
 - *Epipremnum aureum* 'Pearls and Jade'
- All parts of the plant are poisonous
- Toxic to cats and dogs
- Human toxicity - leaves contain raphides (water insoluble calcium oxalate) and unverified proteinaceous toxins
 - Causes burning of lips, tongue and mouth

SATIN POTHOS (*Scindapsus pictus* 'Argyraeus')

• **Satin Pothos Audio Tip**

- Same care as pothos and philodendron
- Avoid soggy soil, temperatures below 60° and cold drafts
- Loses variegation in very low light
- Toxic to cats and dogs
- Human toxicity unknown

ZZ PLANT, CARDBOARD PALM (*Zamioculcas zamifolia*)

• **Great low light plant**

- Allow soil to dry before watering thoroughly
- Avoid cold drafts
- Fleshy rhizomes hold water - start new plants from divisions
- Varieties:
 - 'Raven' - black leaves
 - 'Zenzi' - curled leaves toward tips
 - 'Zamicro' - dwarf
- All parts are poisonous
 - Toxic to cats and dogs
 - Human toxicity - leaves contain calcium oxalate
 - Causes diarrhea and vomiting

PEACE LILY (*Spathiphyllum*)

- Moist soil a must
 - **Wilted and Yellow Leaves on Peace Lilies**
 - Include **Wild Valley Wool Pellets** in potting mix to reduce watering by up to 25%
 - Adds porosity, so great for all plants
 - Variegated peace lily (*Spathiphyllum* 'Domino')
- Sensitive to fluoride and chlorine in the soil
- Toxic to cats and dogs

CHINESE EVERGREEN (*Aglaonema commutatum*)

- Do not overwater
- Prefers temperatures between 65° and 75°
- Tolerates low humidity better than many
- **Easy Care Chinese Evergreen**
- Colorful varieties now more available:
 - 'Red Siam' - red edges on broad leaves
 - 'Red Valentine' - green leaves with pink and red blotches
 - 'Silver Bay' - green leaves with silver centers
 - 'Spilt Milk' - white markings on green leaves
- Toxic to cats and dogs

CAST IRON PLANT, SALOON PLANT (*Aspidistra eliator*)

- Used as a shade tolerant ground cover in the south
- Tolerates very low light and humidity
- Allow soil to dry between watering, especially in winter
- Variegated varieties available:
 - Speckled Cast Iron Plant (*Aspidistra eliator* 'Milky Way')
- **Low Maintenance, Hard to Kill Cast Iron Plant**
- Non-toxic to cats and dogs
- Human toxicity - non listed in either reference

SNAKE PLANT (*Sansevieria*, now *Dracaena*)

- **Snake Plant Audio Tip**
- Prefers bright light
 - Will flower if kept in bright light
- Will tolerate low light - can get floppy
- Dry soil
- Propagate by **leaf cuttings and division**
 - Variegation not continued in leaf cuttings
- Many varieties:
 - **A New Look for an Old Favorite, the Snake Plant**
 - 'Black Gold' - dark green leaves with yellow edges
 - 'Moonshine' - wide leaves, lighter green, especially in brighter light
 - *Sansevieria (Dracaena) aubrytiana* - wide leaves, unique variegation
 - *Sansevieria (Dracaena) cylindrica* - spear-like leaves
- Toxic to cats and dogs
- Human toxicity - saponins
 - low level vomiting, depression, nausea and diarrhea

DRACAENA (*Dracaena*)

- Low light tolerance varies with species and cultivar
- Bright light produces better color in leaves
- Sensitive to chlorine and fluoride in the water
- Varieties:
 - **Corn Plant** (*Dracaena fragrans*)
 - **Blooming Corn Plant**
 - Tricolor or Dragon Tree (*Dracaena marginata* 'Tricolor', 'Colorama' and 'Bicolor') - long narrow leaves with variegation
 - *Dracaena deremensis* 'Dorado' - wide leaves with thin yellow margin
 - *D. deremensis* 'Ulisis' - green leaves with white strings down the middle
 - *D. deremensis* 'Lemon Lime' - green leaves with white stripes down the middle and chartreuse margins
 - *D. deremensis* 'White Jewel' - dark green leaves with wide white stripes
 - '*D. deremensis* 'Limelight' - neon bright, wide chartreuse leaves
 - **Lucky Bamboo** (*Dracaena sanderiana*)
 - Often grown hydroponically - can be grown in soil
 - Keep container filled with water
 - Change water if it becomes cloudy

- Add dilute solution of liquid fertilizer if plant needs nutrient boost
- Toxic to cats and dogs
- Human toxicity - none listed

ARROWHEAD (*Syngonium* formerly *Nepthytis*)

- Moist, well-drained soil
- Prefers high humidity
- Trailing / climbing plant with age
- Prune to manage and direct growth
- **Low Maintenance, Indoor Plant - Arrowhead Vine**
 - *Syngonium podophyllum* 'Strawberry Cream' - new growth pink, turns more green with age
- Toxic to cats and dogs
- Human toxicity - all parts contain calcium oxalate
 - Causes oral irritation; pain and swelling of mouth, tongue and lips

PALMS

PARLOR PALM (*Chamaedorea elegans*)

- **Growing Parlor Palms Indoors**
- Prefers humidity, but tolerates normal home conditions
- Relatively slow growing
- Trimming or air layering tall plants
 - **Trimming Tall Palm**
- Sensitive to fluoride and chlorine in water
- Non-toxic to cats and dogs
- Human toxicity for *Chamaedorea elegans* - non listed
 - Human toxicity for *Chamaedorea seifrizii* - fruit has oxalic acid
 - Causes irritation to skin when handled

SAGO PALM (*Cycas revoluta*)

- Not a true palm, but a **cycad (ancient tropical plant)**
- Bright light for best results - will tolerate low light
- Warm location
- Water when top inch of soil is dry
- High humidity

- Toxic to cats and dogs
- Human toxicity - leaves and seeds contain glycosides
 - Only toxic if eaten in large quantities

SPIDER PLANT (*Chlorophytum comosum*)

- Slightly moist soil, but well-drained
- Bright, indirect light
 - Green variety more tolerant of low light
 - Less variegation in lower light
- Avoid cold drafts
- Brown tips from fluoride and chlorine in water
- Propagate by division or offsets
- **Spider Plant Audio Tip**
- Varieties:
 - 'Variegatum' - leaves edged in white
 - 'Picturatum' - leaves have central yellow stripe
 - 'Milky Way' - cream leaves edged in green
- Non-toxic to cats and dogs
- Human toxicity - none listed

STAGHORN FERN (*Platycerium*)

- Epiphyte - usually found mounted on piece of wood
- Low to medium light
- Moderate moisture - water once the compost or peat moss starts to dry
- High humidity
- No cold drafts
- Forms offsets or pups that can be removed to start new plants
- Non-toxic to cats and dogs
- Human toxicity - none listed

BIRD'S NEST FERN (*Asplenium nidus*)

- Bright, indirect to low light
- Water when top few inches of soil start to dry
- High humidity
- Pet toxicity unknown
- Human toxicity - non listed

PRAYER PLANT (*Maranta* and *Calathea*)

• **Growing Prayer Plants Indoors**

- Moderate to indirect light
 - Scorched and brown spots in direct light
 - Pale leaves, less colorful when it doesn't receive sufficient light
- Consistently moist soil
 - **Brown leaf tips and margins**
- Sensitive to fluoride and chlorine in the water
- Needs high humidity
- Varieties:
 - *Maranta leuconeura* - red veins, light and dark green leaves
 - *Calathea* 'Lancifolia' - long, narrow leaves with dark green horizontal stripes
 - *Calathea picturata* - green leaves with medium and light green markings
- Non-toxic to cats and dogs
- Human toxicity - none listed

NERVE PLANT (*Fittonia*)

- Moist, well-drained, not soggy soil
- High humidity
- Can be short lived, so regularly take cuttings to start new plants
- You will see the white and red veined plants listed as either
 - *Fittonia verschaffeltii*
 - *Fittonia albivenis*
- Non-toxic to cats and dogs
- Human toxicity - none listed

PEPEROMIA (*Peperomia*)

- Prefers bright, indirect light, but will tolerate lower light
 - Less variegation and smaller leaves in low light
- Water when top few inches of soil is dry
- Allow top few inches of soil to dry for thicker leafed varieties
- Generally slow growing, so minimal fertilizer and pruning needed
- Varieties:
 - **Ripple Peperomia** (*Peperomia caperata* 'Ripple') - textured leaves
 - Watermelon Peperomia (*Peperomia argyreia*) - smooth leaves colored like watermelon rind

- Toxicity to humans, cats and dogs
 - Blunt leaf and ivy peperomias listed as non-toxic to cats and dogs
 - Most not listed for human toxicity
 - *Peperomia obtusifolia* leaves contain alkaloids and are moderately toxic
 - No reported cases in humans
 - Some in animals

ANTHURIUM (*Anthurium scherzerianum*)

- These are epiphytes, like most of our orchids
- Grow in a brightly lit location for best flowering
- Will tolerate low light
- Water often enough to prevent roots from drying - don't let plants wilt
- Long blooming - the colorful heart shaped parts we call flowers are actually modified leaves
- These plants need minimal fertilization
- **Anthuriums for Valentine's Day and Indoor Gardens**
- Varieties include flowers of white, red, pink, violet, green and now orange (Sierra Orange)
 - *Anthurium andraeanum* 'Anthzupap'
- Toxic to cats and dogs
- Human toxicity - all parts contain raphides of water insoluble calcium oxalate crystals and unverified proteinaceous toxins
 - Causes oral irritation and swelling

BROMELIADS (various genera)

- Epiphyte grown in a well-drained potting mix or grown as an air plant
- Those with soft, pliable leaves are more tolerant of low light
- Place those with thicker leaves in brighter light
- Long blooming, providing months of colorful flowers
- Water enough to prevent roots from drying
 - Tank types - keep leaf cup full of water and refresh regularly
 - Those growing in soil - water thoroughly and often enough to prevent roots from drying
- Genera:
 - *Guzmania* spp.
 - *Aechmea* spp.
 - *Aechmea fasciata*
 - Grecian Urn (*Quesnelia marmorata*)
 - **Air Plant** (*Tillandsia*) - soak in tepid water every week or two

- Blushing Bromeliad (*Neoregalia* spp.) - listed as non-toxic to cats and dogs
- Human toxicity - none listed

BEGONIA (*Begonia*)

- Bright, indirect light (for flowers) to low light (no blooms and less variegation)
- Water when top few inches of potting mix just starting to dry
- High humidity
- Space for good air circulation and less risk of powdery mildew
- Propagation depends on type
 - Divide rhizome
 - Leaf and stem cutting
 - Leaf
- Warm location free from cold and hot drafts
 - Caring for Begonias Overwintering Indoors
- Toxic to cats and dogs
- Human toxicity - calcium oxalates, with most toxic part underground
 - Causes oral irritation; pain and swelling of mouth, tongue and lips

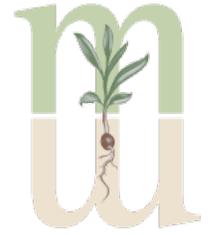


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