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TOP 10 LOW MAINTENANCE HOUSEPLANTS

LOW MAINTENANCE STARTS WITH PROPER SELECTION

- Select the right plant for the growing conditions and your gardening style
- [Add Indoor Plants to Your Gardening Regime](#)
- [Child and Pet Safe Houseplants](#)
- [Plants the are Poisonous to Cats](#)
- [Join the Houseplant Craze and Keep Them Looking Their Best](#)
- [Selecting Houseplants](#)
- [Indoor Plants for Every Room](#)
- [Brighten Up the Indoors with Houseplants](#)

HOUSEPLANTS PURIFY THE AIR

CONSIDER

Light

- An East or West-facing window usually provides adequate light for most plants
 - High light plants within two feet of an East or West-facing window
 - South facing in winter
- North-facing window or up to six feet back or off to the side of an East or West-facing window for low light plants
- Rotate plants growing in lower light to higher light every few weeks
- Turn regularly for more even growth
- Use artificial lights to expand options and increase success
- Shears, awnings and trees can impact the light reaching the plants
 - Each home is different so adjust their location as needed

Moisture

- Water thoroughly and pour off excess that collects in the saucer
- [Watering Tips for Houseplant Care](#)
- [Knowing When to Water Houseplants](#)
- [Caring for Drought Stressed Houseplants](#)
 - Tepid water is best
 - Allow the top few inches of soil to dry for cacti and succulents
 - ▶ Or check the bottom drainage hole



Proven for Over 90 Years

Gardeners have trusted Milorganite's consistent, long-lasting results for over nine decades.

All Purpose

Milorganite is an all-purpose slow-release nitrogen fertilizer that can be used safely on lawns, flowers, vegetables, shrubs and trees.

Doesn't Burn Plants

Milorganite contains virtually no salts, so it won't burn plants, even in the hottest temperatures or driest conditions.

Slow-Release

The slow release nitrogen feeds plants evenly and gradually. It doesn't interfere with flowering or fruit development and encourages root development.

Adds Organic Matter

Milorganite is composed of 85% organic matter, which nourishes the plant and feeds the soil microbes.

Environmentally Friendly

Milorganite has been recycling since 1926, to make a nutrient-rich byproduct that is transformed into a highly effective fertilizer.

- Water moisture lovers
- Houseplants That Tolerate Moist to Wet Soil
- Use pots with drainage holes
 - ▶ Double pot if this is not possible
- Don't allow plants to sit in excess water
- Brown tips on plant leaves
 - ▶ Brown Tips on Houseplant Leaves
 - ▶ Low Light - Low Maintenance Indoor Plants
- Rewetting overly dry soil
 - Water from above then set bottom of pot in sink or saucer of water
 - OR water and wait a few minutes and water again
- Tips for those that overwater
 - Use clay pots that breathe allowing soil to dry out more quickly
 - Select a quality potting mix that drains well
 - Grow moisture loving plants
 - ✓ Papyrus
 - ✓ Spike Moss
 - ✓ Peace Lily
 - ✓ Baby Tears
 - ✓ Ferns
- Tips for those that tend to underwater
 - Plastic or glazed pots that hold moisture
 - Supplemental watering devices
 - Hydroponics and self-watering pots
 - Grow drought tolerant plants
 - ✓ Cacti & Succulents
 - ✓ Ponytail Palm
 - ✓ ZZ Plant
 - ✓ Cast Iron Plant
 - ✓ Snake Plant

Softened Water and Your Plants

Too much or not enough water is often the cause of plant decline and death. But what's in your water could also be a problem.

Softened water can cause some plants to decline or even die. Hard water contains large amounts of calcium and magnesium. These minerals are useful nutrients for our plants, but can interfere with soap's effectiveness.

Most softeners replace the calcium and magnesium with sodium. Plants only need a small amount of this chemical and just a bit more can be toxic. Over time many plants exposed to softened water can begin to decline.

Use unsoftened water for your plants. Capture rainwater or use the water from your dehumidifier as long as it is free of toxic cleaners.

Don't let your plants sit in excess water, softened or not, that collects in the saucer. Use pebbles or other items to elevate the pot above the water that collects in the saucer.

Fluoride and chlorine added to water can also harm some plants. Spider plants, dracaenas and Ti plants often develop brown leaf tips. Keep the soil slightly moist or water these and other sensitive plants with water that is free of these chemicals.

Humidity for Tropical Plants

- Tips for Growing Healthy Houseplants
- Most tropical plants prefer 75 to 85% humidity, our homes have half of that
- Cooler temperatures in winter boost humidity
- Group plants together - as one transpires the others benefit
- Gravel trays - saucer or shallow container with pebbles or marbles
 - Excess water collects below pot and evaporates around the plants
- Terrariums
 - Closed for moisture and humidity loving plants
 - Open for cacti and succulents
 - Build a Tropical Paradise or Dramatic Desert in a Terrarium

Temperature

- Most plants tolerate room temperature (65-75° F), even a bit cooler than we like
 - Don't trap plants between curtain and window
 - May need to move plants back a bit from drafty window in the winter
 - Chill damage - dark, slimy water soaked patches on stems and veins
 - Avoid Cold Damage to Indoor Plants
- Higher the temperature the lower the humidity
- Avoid drafts of hot and cold air
 - Furnace and air conditioner vents
- Winter Care for Indoor Plants
- Cacti and succulents like it cooler, soil drier and tolerate lower humidity in winter
 - Winter Care for Cacti and Succulents

Fertilizer

- Most newly purchased plants are set for several months
- Let your plants be your guide
- Only fertilize actively growing plants (March - November)
- Dilute solution of fertilizer labeled for indoor plants
 - Err on conservative side - you can always add more
 - Slow release / organic forms release small amounts of nutrients over time

Start New Plants with Leaf Cuttings

Expand your indoor plant collection and have fun by starting snake plants from just a small section of a leaf.

Use a sharp knife and cut one of the long leaves into several 3-inch-long pieces. Notch the bottom to mark the end of the cutting that was closest to the roots.

Stick the notched end about an inch deep into a fast-draining potting mix. Water often enough to keep the soil slightly moist. In a month or two a tiny snake plant will begin to grow at the base of the leaf cutting. The original leaf section will eventually die as the new plant begins to grow.

Variiegated snake plants will not retain their variegation with this method of propagation. Divide large overgrown clumps into smaller sections if you want to start new plants and maintain the variegation.

Simply slide the plant out of its pot and use a sharp knife to cut through the fleshy underground rhizomes.

A FEW LOW LIGHT PLANTS

Easy Care Houseplants for Low Light Spaces

ZZ Plant

- Low Maintenance ZZ Indoor Plant

Philodendron

- Easy Care Philodendron
- Dress Up Your Indoor Décor with Easy Care Philodendron
- Heart-leaf Philodendron

Pothos

- Pothos (audio tip)

Cast Iron Plant

- Cast Iron Plant (audio tip)

Snake Plant

- Propagating Snake Plant
- Snake Plant (audio tip)

Chinese Evergreen

- Easy Care Chinese Evergreen

Anthurium

Tillandsia

A FEW HIGH LIGHT PLANTS

Cacti and Succulents

- Winter Care for Cacti and Succulents
- Growing Cactus
- Dress Up the Table with Succulents

Dracaenas

- Dragon Tree (*Dracaena marginata*)
- Variegated Sander's Dracaena
- Lucky Bamboo Dracaena
- Corn Plant

Selecting Artificial Lights for Indoor Gardens

Whether you are trying to start plants from seeds, get your African violets to bloom, or keeping your indoor plants alive, a bit of extra light can help.

Plants need a variety of light (color/wavelength) for proper growth and flowering. Blue light promotes leaf and stem growth while red combined with blue promotes flowering and bud development. In the past gardeners would buy grow lights or use a combination of cool and warm fluorescent bulbs to stimulate both growth and flowering.

Now we have other choices. The full spectrum compact fluorescent bulbs (spiral kind) produce a wide range of light and are suitable for plant growth. You may need to purchase full spectrum sunlight or warm bulbs that emit more of the red light needed to promote flowering and fruiting of plants. The same applies to LED lights. Though your initial investment is more, these lights will last longer and use less energy.

Proper spacing between the lights and plants is also important. Keep artificial lights about 6 inches above the top of seedlings. Adjust the position of your plants or lights as the plants grow. Keep lights 6 to 12 inches above indoor plants. Use reflective surfaces under and around the plants to bounce light back into the plants.

Ponytail Palm

Fiddle Leaf Fig

MORE INFORMATION TO KEEP PLANTS HEALTHY AND LOOKING THEIR BEST

Transplanting

- Transplanting Houseplants
- Transplanting Cactus Pain Free
- Most plants only need transplanting once every few years
- Late winter before active growth is best time to transplant
- Dealing with settled soil
 - Lift plant, add new potting mix at bottom of pot
- Signs your plant needs a bigger pot
 - Water quickly runs out the drainage holes when watered
 - New growth is stunted
 - Roots fill the pot and encircle the root ball
- Only move into a pot one size larger
 - Oversized pots hold moisture and can lead to root rot
- Adjust watering cycle after repotting

Reviving Neglected Houseplants

- Air Layering

Summering Plants Outdoors

- Wait until night temperatures are in high 40's / low 50's
 - Acclimate plants when moving out and back indoors in fall
 - Consider risk of bringing insects back indoors in fall
 - Quarantine and monitor for pests
- Houseplants Move Into the Garden for Summer
- Moving Houseplants Indoors

Dress Up Your Indoor Plants for the Holidays

Dress up your indoor plants with a bit of seasonal color and decorations.

Stop by your favorite florist or garden center and purchase a few water picks and cut flowers. Place the cut flowers in the picks and sink them into the pots of your favorite houseplants. This will add some color and seasonal interest to your indoor garden.

Or create a changeable houseplant container. Plant several compatible indoor plants into a large container. Sink a small empty pot in the space where you want to create a focal point. Set a small potted flowering plant inside this empty one. Replace it occasionally to freshen up the pot or create a seasonal display. You can use mums for fall, poinsettias for Christmas, azalea for spring and so on.

Or fill a large basket with a collection of potted houseplants and flowering plants. The plants can be switched as flowers fade or your mood and décor changes.

Silk flowers, glittery spikes and decorative ornaments can also add a bit of color and sparkle to your indoor garden. Exchange these for red, pink and white hearts on Valentine's Day, colorful Easter eggs, or spring flowering twigs as the seasons change.

Organic Pest Management

- **Fungus Gnats On Houseplants**

- *Bti* - Mosquito Bits now labeled for this

- Aphids, mites, immature scale

- Insecticidal soap, horticulture oils, Neem

- **Eco-friendly Aphid Control**

- Scale

- Lightweight horticulture oil, such as Summit Year-Round Spray Oil controls all stages

- Others listed control just the immature stage

- **Control Scale Insects on Houseplants**

- Whitefly

- Repeat applications needed

- Yellow sticky traps will manage, not eliminate

- **Eco-friendly Whitefly Control** (audio tip)

- **Eco-friendly Whitefly Control** (video tip)



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.

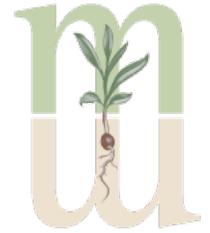


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