

GROWING HOUSEPLANTS
Easily and Successfully

By
Kent Killen

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Dedicated To:

My two children Tina and Gene

Dale and Loriann who made me "Family"

The Jacksons for all those wonderful holiday meals

Ray and Regina who were friends
when I really needed friends

Dr. Toth who kept me well enough to write.

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PREFACE

Did you ever walk into a room or someone's house and get the feeling that it was bare? Did a room ever feel impersonal or dead like a cheap motel room?

It may have felt that way because there were no living plants in the room. Nothing makes a home feel more "lived in" than a beautiful, well maintained plant. It can be a plant with beautiful flowers or a lush foliage plant. Either says, "Hey, I live here and I enjoy life!"

Although the homes and apartments of today are sealed and barricaded more than the ancient caveman's dwelling, some plants may be grown in almost any living environment. Another problem that many of you will need to overcome is lack of time and space to grow the plants. The time and space constraints can be solved by selecting plants which will fit into your schedule.

The main requirements to succeeding in growing attractive plants are variety, water, temperature, soil, air, and pest control.

Here is to your success!!!

VARIETIES

Before you rush down to the store and buy many beautiful plants which will surely die, study the requirements for growing in this book and then consult the table in back to select plants which will fit your lifestyle. If you are subject to be sent on assignment for a week at a time, do not pick a plant that needs watering each day.

To make the choice easier, and to see which will be most likely to grow, the most common plants will be divided into seven groups.

Flowering plants

Annual flowering plants

Hardy flowering plants

Bulb plants

Foliage upright plants

Foliage vining plants

Succulents and Cacti

LIGHT

Before we get to the different types of the plants, we will cover the growing requirements. We are starting with light because that is usually the biggest problem in modern houses and apartments.

All true plants require light in order to live and grow. Most plants need to be protected from direct sunlight. If they grow outdoors, why do we need to protect them? Light coming through glass can act as if it is coming through a magnifying glass and burn the plant. Other plants normally grow in the shade.

Houseplants have been bred to require less light. This does not mean "No Light". Generally, plants will manufacture food and grow better if more light is available. However, we face another contradiction. "Shady plants" can be retarded in their growth if given too much light.

Normally, flowering plants need more light. Geraniums, Begonias, Cyclamens, and Chrysanthemums do best with more light such as a south window which gets more hours of sun. (In the future, I shall type "Mums". That is too many letters.) Plants grown for foliage will usually do better with less light. Palms, ferns, vines, etc. should not be placed in direct sunlight. Nature can break these rules. I have wild fern growing in

the full sun all the day. It is growing wild. I would never try to grow this as a house plant and put it in a bright window.

West windows should be avoided unless you have some type blocking curtain or shade. Look out the window at 3:00 in the afternoon. You will see how strong the sun could be on fragile plants, even flowering ones.

Except for certain foliage plants, North windows do not have enough light for growing.

Just from checking the available windows, you can see where you are starting to limit the plants that can be grown successfully. You need to do this check with each of the requirements.

For an additional investment, you can purchase lights that will make it possible to grow lush plants such as African Violets. These lights make it feasible to grow plants in a windowless basement. I have seen plants grown with lights only and then win awards at shows.

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If you have a Positive Mental Attitude book, or how-to craft book, send that. I can read those on the days I can not get out of bed.

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One of these days I will find a cheap, used laptop and have money at the same time. Then I will be able to use it on the bad days.

Send to "gailkenton@yahoo.com" by Paypal
Type it in, the link usually does not work.

Scroll on down for the rest of the book

MOISTURE

Most plants need a moist atmosphere to attain healthy development. This presents a problem in most dwellings, as the heating and cooling is designed to create a dry atmosphere. Humans need a dry atmosphere to prevent mildew and other fungus. A good compromise for most plants is to spray the leaves once a day. *DO NOT Spray African Violets or any fuzzy leafed plants.*

You can have zone humidity by using a plastic or aluminum tray and filling with coarse pebbles to a depth of about two inches. Place the pots on top of this gravel. Any over watering will be caught by the tray and evaporate upward to the plants. If the plants are potted in a real clay pot (not the fake look-alikes) it will absorb some moisture from the rocks and pass it through to the soil.

As you read the following, keep in mind that over watering will rot roots:

An *ample* supply of water should be furnished the plant at the roots. Plants growing in the dry conditions of the home lose water through the leaves. They lose more water than the ones growing outdoors because of the low humidity. This must be replaced by the roots. The water in the soil serves two functions. The first is to supply water to the plant tissues. The second is to dissolve the nutrients from the soil so that the plant may take them into the root system and use them.

Lack of water causes the plant to wilt. The internal water pressure is what holds the new growth upright. After wilting, the plant begins to starve from lack of food.

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