Atrium Plant List

MSU Plant Growth Center



Denotes plants native to Montana

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
College of AGRICULTURE

Bromeliad – *Aechmea fasciata*




About
An evergreen flowering plant native to the Brazilian rainforest, where it grows as an epiphyte (without soil) on the branches of taller trees. Popular as a houseplant for its showy flower spikes, with many cultivars and hybrids on the market.

Light
Bright indirect light to filtered shade; avoid direct light

Water
Keep potting media only slightly damp; pour filtered or distilled water directly into the cup-like central leaves

Soil
Use a loose, fast-draining potting mix like orchid bark or sphagnum moss; heavy soil will cause the base of the plant to rot

Temperature
60-85°F

Humidity
Likes high humidity (50-70%); mist leaves frequently or place pot on a tray of pebbles filled with water

Notes
Bromeliads only bloom once in their lifetime, after which the parent plant puts out small offshoots (called pups) at its base before dying

Lipstick Plant – *Aeschynanthus radicans*




About
A trailing plant native to the wet tropical rainforests of Southeast Asia, where it grows as an epiphyte on tree branches or rocks and roots into layers of moss and leaf litter instead of soil.

Light
Bright indirect light; avoid hot, direct sunlight as it can scorch the leaves

Water
Allow the two inch of soil to dry out between waterings; never let pot sit in standing water

Soil
Use a light, fast draining potting mix; frequently grown in hanging baskets

Temperature
65-75°F; protect plant from any cold drafts or drastic temperature changes

Humidity
Likes moderate to high humidity; place pot on a tray of pebbles filled with water or use a humidifier

Notes
Prune long or leggy stems back by about 30% after the flowering cycle to encourage bushier growth

Aloe – *Aloe vera*



About

A popular succulent plant famous for its fleshy leaves and their soothing gel. Native to the Arabian peninsula, where it grows in arid deserts and dry shrublands. Widely cultivated and naturalized around the world.

Light

Bright indirect light, such as near a south- or west-facing window

Water

Let the soil dry out almost completely between waterings, then water thoroughly

Soil

Use a fast-draining cactus or succulent potting mix, or a standard potting mix with extra perlite and coarse sand

Temperature

55-80°F; protect from cold drafts

Humidity

Tolerates household humidity levels

Norfolk Island Pine - *Araucaria heterophylla*



About

A coniferous tree native to a small cluster of islands in the South Pacific near Australia and New Zealand, where they grow on coastal headlands and sea cliffs. It is commonly grown as a houseplant, and will remain small in a pot, but in the wild they can grow to 200 feet tall!

Light

Bright light; place near a south, east, or west-facing window

Water

Water thoroughly when the top two inches of soil have dried out; keep from drying out completely, but do not let sit in standing water

Soil

Use a fast-draining, sandy potting mix

Temperature

60-75°F; keep away from drafts like vents or exterior doors

Humidity

Likes moderate humidity; place pot on a tray of pebbles filled with water or use a humidifier

Notes

Norfolk Island Pines grow slowly indoors; will not need frequent repotting

Bearberry (Kinnikinnick) - *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*



About
A Montana-native evergreen shrub that sprawls out as a groundcover. It has a circumpolar distribution across North America, Europe, and Russia, and is both cold-hardy and fire-resistant. The fruit and leaves are edible and have been used by Native Americans for centuries.

Light
Full sun to partial shade

Water
Likes deep, infrequent watering; extremely drought-tolerant once established

Soil
Prefers low-fertility, acidic, sandy or gravelly soil with lots of drainage

Temperature
Hardy to USDA zone 2

Notes
Attracts pollinators, including butterflies and hummingbirds, and the berries are eaten by a wide range of wildlife

Asparagus Fern – *Asparagus setaceus*



About
An evergreen perennial vine native to southern Africa, where it grows forest understories. It is commonly grown as an ornamental plant, but it has become naturalized and invasive in some regions.

Light
Bright but indirect light; direct sun can scorch delicate leaves

Water
Water thoroughly when the top two inches of soil have dried out; will not tolerate standing water

Soil
Use a well-draining potting mix high in peat moss and perlite

Temperature
55-75°F; keep away from cold drafts, vents, or open windows

Humidity
Likes high humidity; place pot on a tray of pebbles filled with water, put it in a bathroom, or use a humidifier

Notes
Provide a trellis for the vines to climb on

Cast-iron Plant – *Aspidistra elatior*



About
An evergreen rhizomatous perennial native to Japan and Taiwan, where it grows as a understory plant. It is widely cultivated as a houseplant and has a reputation for withstanding neglect.

Light
Medium indirect light; avoid direct sunlight

Water
Water deeply only once the top half to two-thirds of the soil in the pot has dried out; use filtered or distilled water where possible

Soil
Use a well-draining potting mix with perlite and peat moss

Temperature
60-75°F; keep away from cold drafts

Humidity
Household humidity levels are usually adequate

Eve's Needle Cactus – *Austrocylindropuntia subulata*



About
A low-maintenance cactus native to the South American Andes mountains. Introduced in the Mediterranean for use in hedges, but it has become invasive in some areas. Grown as an ornamental plant in warmer climates, where it is popular for rock gardens and xeriscaping.

Light
Needs at least 6 hours of full, direct sunlight per day, such as in a south-facing window; not suitable for lower-light rooms

Water
Let soil dry out completely between waterings; prolonged soil moisture will rot the roots, especially when kept as a houseplant

Soil
Use a specialized fast-draining cactus or succulent potting mix

Temperature
65-80°F

Humidity
Tolerates household humidity levels

Ponytail Palm – *Beaucarnea recurvata*



About
Despite its name, this plant is not closely related to true palm trees. Endemic to Mexico, it grows in rocky and nutrient poor soils in low deciduous forests, cliffs, and steep mountains. It is commonly grown as a houseplant but critically endangered in its native range due to habitat loss and human harvesting. In the wild, they can grow to over 20 feet high.

Light
Likes bright light; place near a window

Water
Allow the potting soil to dry out completely between waterings; overwatering will cause the roots and stem to rot

Soil
Use a cactus- or succulent-specific potting mix that drains quickly; they also like to be slightly snug in their containers, so repot sparingly

Temperature
60-80°F

Humidity
Average indoor humidity is ideal

Notes
The swollen base of the trunk is used to store water during long periods of drought in its native habitat

King Begonia – *Begonia rex*



About
A rhizomatous flowering plant native to the eastern Himalayas that is widely cultivated due to its striking leaves. Over 500 cultivars and hybrids of Begonia Rex are in cultivation, with a wide array of leaf shapes and colors.

Light
Bright indirect light; place near an east- or west-facing window, but direct sun can scorch the delicate leaves

Water
Water thoroughly when the top inch of soil is dry; do not let the pot sit in standing water; keep water off of the leaves to prevent fungal diseases

Soil
Use a light, porous potting mix high in perlite or add orchid bark

Temperature
60-80°F; protect from cold drafts

Humidity
Likes high humidity (over 50%); place pot on a tray of pebbles filled with water or use a humidifier

Bougainvillea – *Bougainvillea glabra*



About

An evergreen climbing shrub native to Brazil and Peru but widely cultivated around the world for its colorful papery flower bracts. It is also popular for bonsai cultivation.

Light

Full sun (at least 8 hours of direct sunlight daily)

Water

Water deeply when soil is dry to the touch; do not let soil remain waterlogged

Soil

Use a fast-draining potting mix that is slightly acidic (pH 5.5-6.5)

Temperature

60-95°F

Humidity

40-60% humidity

Notes

Trim unruly shoots after a flowering cycle or perform hard ‘shape pruning’ in late winter or early spring for more compact growth; plants also tend to flower more heavily when they are slightly pot-bound

Blue Grama – *Bouteloua gracilis*



About

A perennial grass native to North America, where it is a common species in shortgrass prairies. It adapts to a wide range of soil types and is highly drought tolerant, and it is valued for forage as it tolerates heavy grazing. Commonly used in landscaping, and the seed heads are useful for fresh or dried floral arrangements.

Light

Full sun (at least 8 hours of direct sunlight daily)

Water

Highly drought tolerant; can survive on 7 inches of annual rainfall

Soil

Widely adaptable to different soil types, but needs well-drained soil; intolerant of water-logged soils

Temperature

Hardy to USDA zone 3

Notes

Easily established from seed, but spreads primarily through vegetative tillers; wind-dispersed seeds don’t travel very far

Parlor Palm – *Chamaedorea elegans*




About
A species of small palm tree native to southern Mexico and Guatemala, where it thrives on rainforest floors. It is one of the most widely sold houseplant palms in the world.

Light
Bright, indirect sunlight; place near a sunny window but avoid direct sunlight

Water
Let the top inch of soil dry out between waterings

Soil
Use a well-draining peat-based potting mix

Temperature
65-75°F

Humidity
Average room humidity is fine, but if leaf tips are browning, place the pot on a tray of pebbles filled with water or use a humidifier

Notes
The fronds are popular with florists for use in flower arrangements and are also used in Palm Sunday church services, as they can last up to a month after being cut

Spider Plant – *Chlorophytum comosum*



About
An evergreen plant in the Asparagus family, native to tropical and southern Africa but widely naturalized in other parts of the world. They are a popular and easy-to-grow houseplant as they thrive in a wide range of conditions.

Light
Bright indirect light, close to a window but not in the direct sunlight as this can scorch the leaves

Water
Water thoroughly when the top half of the soil in the pot has dried out; avoid standing water as it can cause the roots to rot

Soil
Use a well-draining potting mix with plenty of perlite or orchid bark

Temperature
65-85°F; keep away from cold drafts

Humidity
Average household humidity is usually fine, but if leaf tips turn crispy use a humidifier or place the pot on a tray of pebbles filled with water

Notes
The long flower spikes eventually form small plantlets on them which can be easily propagated out or left to cascade from the mother plant

Grape Ivy – *Cissus alata*



About
A vining plant native to the tropical Americas, where it grows in moist, shady areas under rainforest canopies. It is popular as a houseplant for its fast-growing, glossy foliage.

Light
Bright indirect light, such as near an east- or west-facing window

Water
Water thoroughly when the top inch of soil is dry

Soil
Use a light, well-draining potting mix with plenty of perlite, peat, or bark to prevent root rot

Temperature
60-80°F

Humidity
Likes moderate humidity; mist leaves occasionally, use a humidifier, or place pot on a tray of pebbles filled with water

Notes
Prune back leggy or overgrown stems to encourage denser growth; can be grown in a hanging basket or given a trellis or pole to climb on

Jade Plant – *Crassula ovata*



About
A slow-growing succulent plant native to South Africa and Mozambique, where it thrives in rocky, arid hillsides. Highly drought tolerant and popular as a houseplant, with many cultivars on the market.

Light
Likes at least 6 hours of bright light per day; place near a south- or west-facing window

Water
Let the soil dry out completely between waterings; highly susceptible to overwatering and root rot when grown as a houseplant

Soil
Use a fast-draining cactus- or succulent-specific potting mix

Temperature
65-75°

Humidity
Tolerates average household humidity levels

Notes
Jade plants can live for over 50 years with proper care

Sago Palm – *Cycas revoluta*



About

Native to southern Japan and grown around the world as an ornamental plant. Not a true palm despite its name. It is a popular landscaping plant in temperate regions but can also be grown as a houseplant or bonsai plant. They are slow growing but can live for decades with proper care.

Light

Bright indirect light; avoid direct afternoon sunlight

Water

Allow soil to dry completely between waterings; overwatering can lead to root rot

Soil

Use a cactus- or succulent-specific potting mix with extra perlite or sand in a pot with good drainage holes

Temperature

65-75°F; avoid cold drafts and drastic temperature swings

Humidity

Tolerates household humidity levels

Notes

The cycad family dates back roughly 300 million years and has an extensive fossil record

German Ivy – *Delairea odorata*



About

A fast-growing perennial vine native to South Africa grown as a houseplant for its attractive shiny foliage. Introduced and invasive in some coastal areas of North America.

Light

Bright indirect light; avoid direct afternoon light as it can scorch the glossy leaves, but too little light will result in weak and leggy stems

Water

Water thoroughly when the top one to two inches of soil feel dry to the touch; never let sit in standing water

Soil

Use a rich but well-draining potting mix, with a bit of perlite or sand to improve air flow around the roots; can be grown in a hanging basket or given a trellis or pole to climb on

Temperature

60-75°F; protect from cold drafts, vents, and drastic temperature swings

Humidity

Average household humidity is sufficient, but can benefit from occasional misting

Dumb Cane – *Dieffenbachia seguine*



About
A tropical evergreen houseplant popular for its large, often variegated leaves. Native to wet tropical regions of the Caribbean, Central America, and northern South America, where it grows in shady areas and thickets near water sources.

Light
Bright indirect sunlight; direct sunlight can scorch the leaves

Water
Water thoroughly when the top two inches of soil are dried out; do not let sit in standing water as this causes root rot

Soil
Use a lightweight, well-draining potting mix formulated for tropical plants

Temperature
65-75°F; protect from cold drafts and vents

Humidity
Likes moderate to high humidity; place pot on a tray of pebbles filled with water or use a humidifier

Notes
Rotate the pot a quarter turn each time it is watered to keep growth straight and upright

Corn Plant – *Dracaena fragrans*



About
An evergreen shrub native to upland regions of tropical Africa. It is popular as a houseplant due to its low-maintenance upkeep and fragrant flowers. Many cultivars also have striking variegated foliage.

Light
Bright indirect light; direct sunlight can scorch or bleach the leaves

Water
Water thoroughly when the top two inches of soil feel dry; never let sit in standing water to prevent root rot; use filtered or distilled water as chlorine in tap water can burn leaf tips (alternatively, allow tap water to sit overnight before using)

Soil
Use a rich, well-draining potting mix in a container with good drainage

Temperature
60-75°F; protect from cold drafts, vents, and air conditioners

Humidity
Tolerates household humidity; mist leaves if tips begin to turn crisp

Dragon Tree – *Dracaena marginata*



About

An evergreen shrub native to Madagascar, where it grows in a variety of habitats from dry scrublands to moist forested areas. Popular as a houseplant for its eye-catching spiky leaves and ease of care, and it has many variegated cultivars.

Light

Bright, indirect light, such as near a south- or west-facing window; avoid direct afternoon sunlight as it can scorch the leaves

Water

Allow the top half of the soil to dry completely dry out between waterings; use filtered or distilled water as plants are sensitive to fluoride and salts in tap water (alternatively, allow tap water to sit overnight before using)

Soil

Use any well-draining houseplant potting mix

Temperature

65-80°F

Humidity

Tolerates household humidity levels; mist leaves if they start to look crispy

Snake Plant – *Dracaena trifasciata*



About

An evergreen perennial plant native to subtropical Africa, Madagascar, and southern Asia. Popular as a houseplant due to its low-maintenance upkeep, with many cultivars on the market.

Light

Like bright, indirect light; will tolerate lower light, but will grow much more slowly

Water

Let soil dry out completely before watering, then water thoroughly

Soil

Use any standard houseplant potting mix

Temperature

60-75°; protect from cold drafts

Humidity

Tolerates household humidity levels

Notes

Spreads through a creeping rhizome under the soil; rhizomes are strong enough to punch through plastic pots when root-bound!

Pothos – *Epipremnum aureum*



About
A vining plant native to French Polynesia, where it thrives in warm and wet rainforests, but widely naturalized in tropical and sub-tropical regions of the world. Cultivated as a low-maintenance houseplant with many ornamental varieties.

Light
Medium to bright indirect light; can tolerate lower light levels, but variegation will fade

Water
Let the top two inches of soil dry out between waterings; never let plant sit in standing water

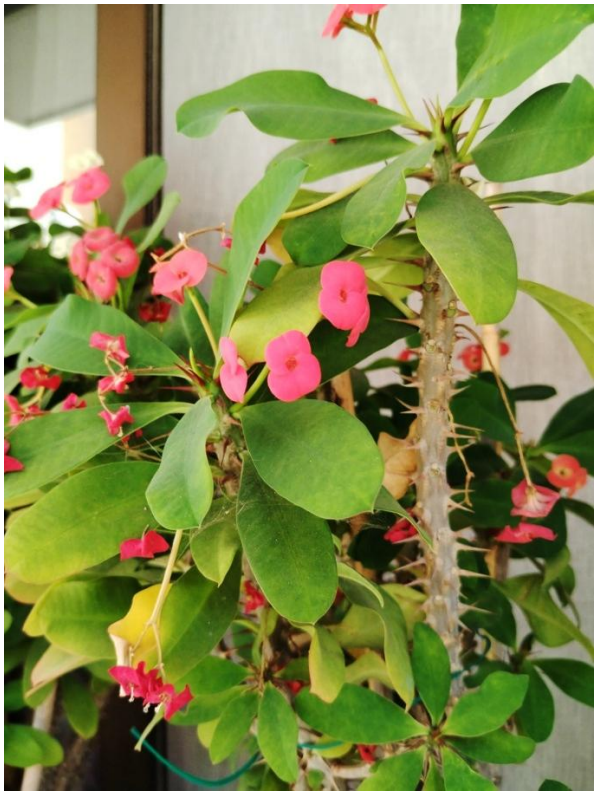
Soil
Use any standard, well-draining houseplant potting mix; can be grown in a hanging basket, or given a trellis or pole to climb on

Temperature
65-80°F

Humidity
Tolerates household humidity levels

Notes
Prune long or leggy vines just above a leaf node to encourage bushier growth; stem cuttings are very easy to root in a glass of water before planting back into original pot

Crown of Thorns – *Euphorbia milii*



About
A flowering succulent subshrub native to Madagascar but commonly cultivated as an ornamental plant. Not a cactus despite its spiny appearance.

Light
Give 3 to 6 hours of direct sunlight per day; keep near a south- or west-facing window

Water
Allow soil to dry out completely between waterings to avoid root rot

Soil
Use a fast-draining cactus or succulent potting mix and a pot with good drainage holes

Temperature
65-75°F; protect from cold drafts

Humidity
Tolerates average household humidity levels

Notes
The milky sap is a skin and eye irritant, and if ingested is mildly toxic to humans and very toxic to pets

Fire Stick – *Euphorbia tirucalli*



About
A succulent shrub native to Africa, where it grows in semi-arid tropical regions, especially in savannah habitats. Introduced in many other tropical regions and cultivated as a houseplant. Can grow up to 30 feet tall outdoors.

Light
Give 4 to 6 hours of bright direct sunlight per day; more sun brings out a red to orange tint on leaf tips

Water
Allow soil to dry out completely between waterings

Soil
Use a fast-draining cactus or succulent potting mix and a pot with good drainage holes

Temperature
65-80°F; protect from cold drafts

Humidity
Tolerates average household humidity levels

Notes
The milky sap is a skin and eye irritant, and if ingested is mildly toxic to humans and very toxic to pets

African Milk Tree – *Euphorbia trigona*



About
An upright succulent shrub native to central Africa, where it thrives in seasonally dry tropical forests and savannahs. Cultivated in tropical areas as a hedge and as a houseplant around the world.

Light
Give bright indirect light with a few hours of direct sunlight per day

Water
Allow soil to dry out completely between waterings

Soil
Use a fast-draining cactus or succulent potting mix and a pot with good drainage holes

Temperature
65-85°F; protect from cold drafts and vents

Humidity
Tolerates average household humidity levels

Notes
The milky sap is a skin and eye irritant, and if ingested is mildly toxic to humans and very toxic to pets

Common Fig – *Ficus carica*




About
A large shrub to small tree with edible fruit, native to the Mediterranean and central and southern Asia but widely cultivated around the world.

Light
Full sun for at least 8 hours per day; may need supplemental light if grown indoors

Water
Allow the top inch of soil to dry out between waterings; do not let sit in standing water

Soil
Prefers rich, well-draining loamy soil

Temperature
70-80°F

Notes
Figs were one of the first plants ever cultivated by humans

Rubber Plant – *Ficus elastica*




About
An evergreen tree native to southern and south-eastern Asia but introduced and cultivated around the world as an ornamental for its large shiny leaves. Many cultivars have variegated foliage.

Light
Likes bright, indirect light, such as near an east-, south-, or west-facing window; variegated varieties need brighter light

Water
Let the top few inches of soil dry out before watering

Soil
Use a well-draining potting mix with plenty of peat moss and perlite in a pot with good drainage holes

Temperature
60-85°F

Humidity
Tolerates average household humidity levels

Notes
The milky white sap is high in latex, which can be used to make rubber but can irritate the eyes and skin

Fiddle-leaf Fig – *Ficus lyrata*



About
An evergreen tree native to Western Africa, but widely cultivated around the world as an ornamental plant for its large, violin-shaped leaves. Some ornamental varieties have variegated leaves.

Light
Bright indirect light; avoid harsh direct midday sun as it can scorch the leaves

Water
Let the top three inches of soil dry out between waterings

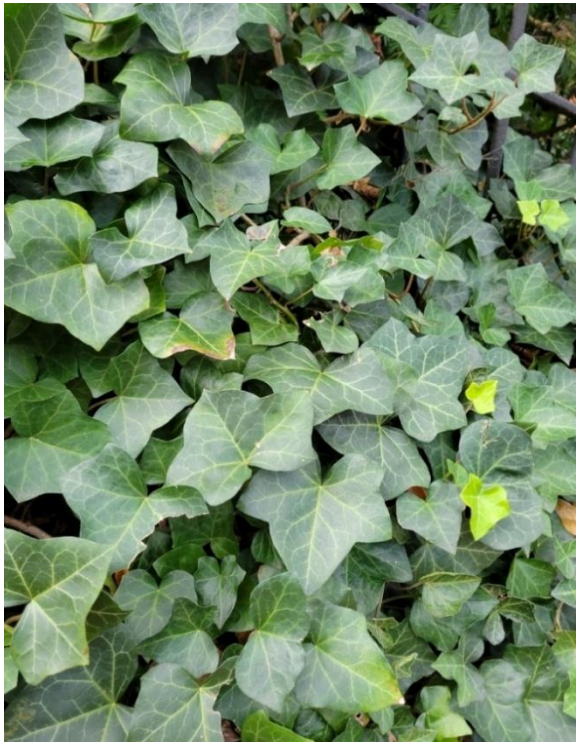
Soil
Use a well-draining houseplant potting mix with plenty of perlite and a pot with good drainage holes

Temperature
65-75°F; avoid cold drafts and vents

Humidity
Likes moderate humidity; use a humidifier or place pot on a tray of pebbles filled with water

Notes
The milky white sap can irritate the eyes and skin

English Ivy – *Hedera helix*



About
A climbing or creeping evergreen vine native to Europe and western Asia but widely cultivated around the world for its attractive glossy leaves. Ornamental cultivars have a variety of leaf shapes and colors. Widely naturalized and labeled invasive in some areas.

Light
Bright indirect light; avoid direct sunlight which can burn the leaves

Water
Allow the top two inches of soil to dry out between waterings

Soil
Use any well-draining houseplant potting mix

Temperature
50-75°F

Humidity
Likes moderate humidity; mist leaves regularly, use a humidifier, or place the pot on a tray of pebbles filled with water

Notes
Can be grown in a hanging basket or given a trellis or pole to climb

Dwarf Umbrella Tree – *Heptapleurum arboricola*



About
An evergreen shrub native to China and Taiwan and commonly cultivated as a houseplant due to its tolerance for neglect. Numerous ornamental varieties have been selected for a variety of leaf shapes and colors.

Light
Bright indirect light; direct sun will burn the leaves

Water
Allow the top inch of soil to dry out between waterings; overwatering can lead to root rot

Soil
Use a rich, well-draining potting mix

Temperature
60-75°F

Humidity
Likes moderate humidity; mist leaves regularly, use a humidifier, or place the pot on a tray of pebbles filled with water

Wax Plant – *Hoya carnosa*



About
A vining perennial native to eastern Asia and widely cultivated as an ornamental plant for its glossy leaves and fragrant flowers. Ornamental cultivars have been selected for a wide variety of leaf colors and shapes.

Light
Bright indirect light, such as near an east- or west-facing window; avoid direct midday sun which can scorch leaves

Water
Allow top two inches of soil to dry out before watering

Soil
Use a loose, chunky potting mix with plenty of perlite or orchid bark

Temperature
60-85°F; protect from cold drafts and vents

Humidity
Tolerates average household humidity levels

Notes
Likes to be slightly root-bound, as crowded roots encourage blooming; can be grown as a hanging basket or given a trellis to climb

Silver Squill – *Ledebouria socialis*



About
A low-growing bulbous perennial plant native to South Africa, where it grows in subtropical dry savannahs and forests. Commonly cultivated as a houseplant for its spotted silver-green foliage and ease of care.

Light
Bright indirect light, with a few hours of gentle morning or evening sunlight

Water
Drought tolerant; allow the soil to dry out completely between waterings

Soil
Use a fast-draining cactus- or succulent-specific potting mix in a shallow pot with good drainage holes; keep the bulbs of the plant sitting partially above the soil line to prevent rot

Temperature
60-85°F

Humidity
Thrive in low to average household humidity levels

Notes
Easily propagated by dividing the clusters of root bulbs

Fishtail Fern – *Microsorum punctatum*



About
A lush, unique tropical fern grown for its branching leaves. Native to western Africa, southern Asia, and the Pacific islands, where it grows in moist tropical forest floors. Can grow in soil or climb trees.

Light
Moderate to bright indirect light; direct sunlight can scorch the glossy leaves

Water
Allow the top three inches of soil to dry out between waterings; use filtered or rainwater where possible, and never let sit in standing water

Soil
Use a loose, well-draining potting mix with plenty of perlite or orchid bark in a pot with good drainage holes; do not bury the rhizome – keep it right at or slightly above the soil to prevent rot

Temperature
60-75°F; protect from cold drafts and drastic temperature swings

Humidity
Likes high humidity; use a humidifier or place pot on a tray of pebbles filled with water

Monarch Fern – *Microsorum scolopendria*



About
A terrestrial fern native to tropical Africa and Asia and South Pacific islands; widely naturalized in other regions and considered invasive in Hawaii. Strongly rhizomatous and spreads as a groundcover through understory habitats.

Light
Bright indirect light, such as near an east- or west-facing window; avoid direct midday sun as it can scorch the fronds

Water
Allow the top inch of soil to dry out between waterings

Soil
Use a loose, fast-draining tropical potting mix with plenty of perlite; do not bury the creeping surface rhizome or it will rot

Temperature
65-85°F

Humidity
Likes medium to high humidity; use a humidifier or place pot on a tray of pebbles filled with water

Swiss Cheese Plant – *Monstera deliciosa*



About
A striking evergreen plant native to the tropical forests of Central America, where it climbs up tree trunks. Widely cultivated as a houseplant for its famous leaves with splits and holes (called fenestrations), with some variegated cultivars on the market.

Light
Bright indirect light; direct midday sun can burn the leaves, but too little light will diminish the leaf splits and fenestrations

Water
Allow the top three inches of soil to dry out between waterings; do not let sit in standing water

Soil
Use a chunky, well-draining potting mix with plenty of perlite or orchid bark in a pot with good drainage holes

Temperature
65-85°F; keep away from cold drafts and vents

Humidity
Prefers at least 60% humidity; use a humidifier or place pot on a tray of pebbles filled with water

Notes
The fruit is edible when ripe; unripe fruits contain oxalates than can irritate the mouth

Dwarf Banana – *Musa acuminata*



About
One of several banana species cultivated as a houseplant, and native to southern Asia. It is technically not a tree but an evergreen herbaceous plant. Can spread asexually through suckers, making it a rapid pioneer species in disturbed areas in its native range.

Light
Needs 6 hours of bright direct or indirect sunlight daily

Water
Allow the top inch of soil to dry out between waterings; do not let soil remain soggy as it can lead to root rot

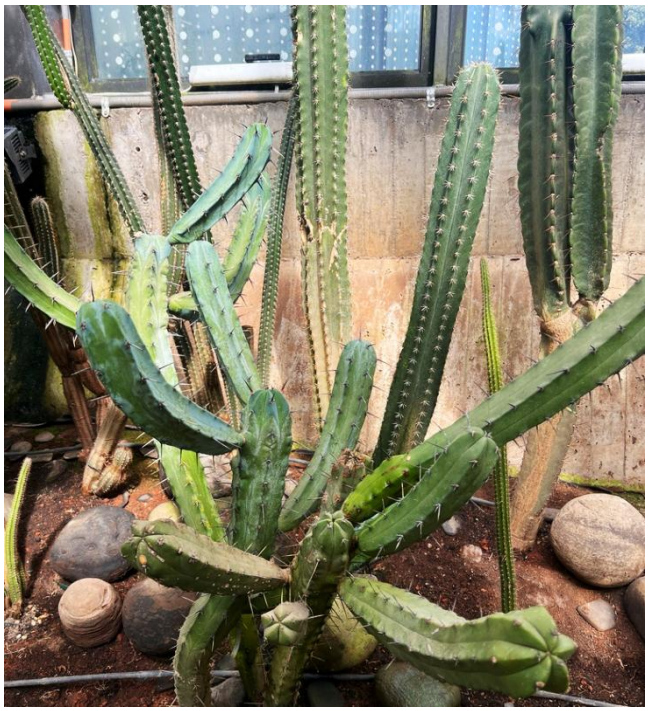
Soil
Use a loose, well-draining houseplant potting mix

Temperature
65-85°F

Humidity
Likes high humidity; use a humidifier or place pot on a tray of pebbles filled with water

Notes
First cultivated by humans around 8000 BC; one of the earliest examples of domesticated plants

Blue Myrtle Cactus – *Myrtillocactus geometrizans*



About
A cactus native to central and northern Mexico. Cultivated as a houseplant for its blue-green color. Many mutated cultivars are propagated for their interesting growth patterns.

Light
Needs full sun to bright direct light to maintain its striking blue color and compact shape; will grow leggy and thin in lower light conditions

Water
Allow soil to dry completely between waterings, then water thoroughly

Soil
Use a fast-draining cactus or succulent potting mix with extra pumice or perlite to prevent root rot

Temperature
60-85°F

Humidity
Tolerates average household humidity levels

Boston Fern – *Nephrolepis exaltata*



About
A fern native to Central and South America, Africa, and Polynesia, where it grows in humid forests and swamps. Popular as a houseplant and commonly grown in hanging baskets, with many ornamental cultivars.

Light
Bright indirect light, such as near an east- or south-facing window; direct sunlight can scorch the delicate leaves

Water
Keep the soil evenly moist, but do not let it remain soggy or waterlogged; water when the top inch of soil feels dry

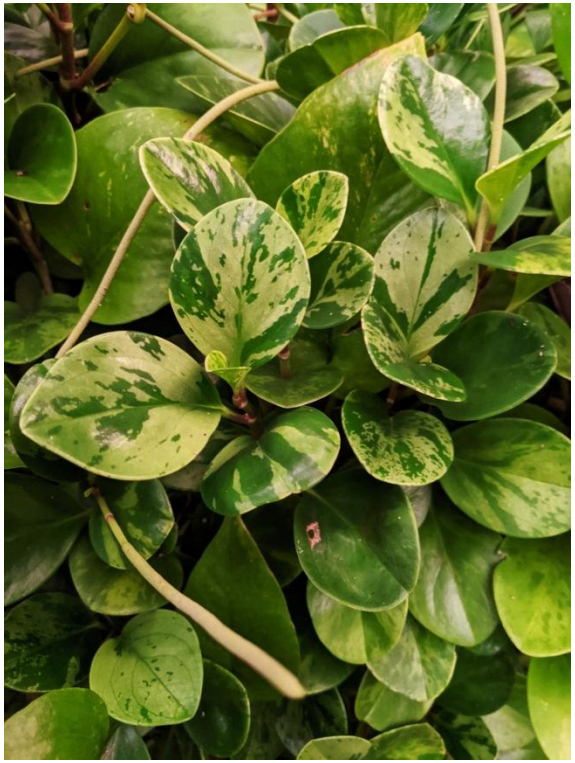
Soil
Use a rich but well-draining peat-based potting mix

Temperature
65-75°F; keep away from cold drafts and vents

Humidity
Needs at least 50% humidity; use a humidifier or place pot on a tray of pebbles filled with water

Notes
Snip off any dead or yellowing fronds at the base to encourage fresh new growth

Baby Rubberplant – *Peperomia obtusifolia*



About
An evergreen perennial plant native to the tropical Americas. Commonly cultivated as a houseplant for its attractive glossy leaves, with many variegated cultivars in production.

Light
Bright indirect light near an east- or south-facing window; direct sunlight can scorch the fleshy leaves, but too little light will cause variegation to fade

Water
Allow the top two to three inches of soil to dry out between waterings; never let the plant sit in soggy soil

Soil
Use a loose, fast-draining potting mix with plenty of perlite or orchid bark

Temperature
65-75°F; keep away from cold drafts and drastic temperature swings

Humidity
Prefers higher humidity; use a humidifier or place pot on a tray of pebbles filled with water

Notes

Heartleaf Philodendron – *Philodendron hederaceum*



About
A vining plant native to Central America and the Caribbean, where it thrives in the wet understory by climbing on tree trunks. Widely cultivated in the houseplant industry for its glossy heart-shaped leaves, with many ornamental cultivars and hybrids.

Light
Bright indirect light; will grow slower and with smaller leaves in lower light

Water
Allow the top two inches of soil to dry out between waterings; never let it sit in standing water

Soil
Use a fast-draining peat-based potting mix in a pot with good drainage

Temperature
65-80°F

Humidity
Tolerates average household humidity levels

Notes
Trim long or leggy stems just above a leaf node to promote bushier growth; cuttings root easily in water for replanting; can be grown in a hanging basket or given a trellis to climb on

Elkhorn Fern – *Platycerium bifurcatum*



About
An epiphytic (growing on the surface of another plant) fern native to Australia, where it can be found forming clumping colonies on tree limbs and boulders in a variety of habitats. Widely cultivated in the ornamental industry.

Light
Bright indirect or filtered light, such as near an east- or west-facing window; direct sunlight can scorch the tender fronds

Water
Soak the root-ball in a sink for 10 to 15 minutes when dry; let the base dry out between soakings to prevent root rot

Soil
Best grown mounted on a rot-resistant board or in a hanging basket with a ball of sphagnum moss under the roots, mimicking its natural epiphytic habit

Temperature
60-80°F

Humidity
Likes high humidity; use a humidifier or place in a naturally-humid room like a bathroom or kitchen

Western Sword Fern – *Polystichum munitum*



About
An evergreen perennial fern native to western North America, where it grows in moist coniferous woodland understories. Some landscape use in the western US, but not commonly grown elsewhere or as a houseplant.

Light
Partial to full shade; avoid hot afternoon sun that can scorch the fronds

Water
Keep newly planted ferns consistently moist; older plants are a bit more drought tolerant

Soil
Prefer rich, well-draining soil; do not bury the crown (where the frond bases meet) when planting

Temperature
Hardy to USDA zone 3

Notes
Fronds are often used by florists in bouquets; rhizomes are edible, and the fronds were used by indigenous peoples to line fire pits and mattresses

Elephant Bush – *Portulacaria afra*



About
A small-leaved succulent plant native to South Africa, where it favors dry rocky outcrops and shrubland thickets. Popular as houseplants due to ease of care, and some cultivars have variegated leaves.

Light
Bright direct to indirect light for at least 6 hours a day; low light causes leggy growth

Water
Allow soil to dry out completely between waterings; then soak thoroughly

Soil
Use a gritty, fast-draining cactus or succulent potting mix

Temperature
65-85°F

Humidity
Tolerates household humidity levels

Common Guava – *Psidium guajava*



About

A small evergreen tree native to South America, where it grows in humid grasslands and roadsides. It is widely cultivated for its edible fruits and has been established across the tropics. Spreads aggressively through suckers and can be invasive in some areas.

Light

Full sun; at least 6 to 8 hours of direct sunlight daily

Water

Allow top two to three inches of soil to dry out before watering thoroughly; avoid soggy soil that can lead to root rot

Soil

Use loose loamy or sandy soil with good drainage

Temperature

70-80°F

Humidity

Likes moderate humidity; use a humidifier or place in a naturally-humid room like a bathroom or kitchen

Thanksgiving Cactus – *Schlumbergera truncata*



About

An epiphytic tropical cactus native to Brazil, where it grows in moist tropical or subtropical forests on trees or rocks. Widely cultivated as an ornamental plant, especially for holiday use as it blooms in the winter.

Light

Bright indirect light; direct midday sunlight can burn the leaves

Water

Allow the top inch of soil to dry out between waterings

Soil

Use a well-draining potting mix amended with extra perlite or orchid bark, or use a cactus- or succulent-specific potting mix

Temperature

60-70°F; protect from cold drafts and drastic temperature shifts

Humidity

Likes moderate to high humidity; use a humidifier or place pot on a tray of pebbles filled with water

Notes

Needs at least 13 hours of darkness per night for several weeks to start flowering

Peace Lily – *Spathiphyllum wallisii*



About
A perennial plant native to Colombia and Venezuela, where it grows on shady rainforest floors. It is very popular as a houseplant, with many hybrids and cultivars on the market.

Light
Bright indirect light, like near an east- or west-facing window; direct sunlight can scorch leaves

Water
Allow the top inch of soil to dry out between waterings; leaves will start to droop a little when the plant is thirsty; don't let pot sit in standing water or the roots will rot

Soil
Use a rich, well-draining houseplant-specific potting mix

Temperature
65-80°F; keep away from cold drafts, vents, and drastic temperature swings

Humidity
Likes higher humidity (above 50%); mist leaves regularly or use a humidifier

Notes
Can tolerate lower light conditions, but won't produce as many blooms

African Violet – *Streptocarpus ionanthus*



About
An herbaceous flowering plant native to Tanzania and Kenya. It thrives in high-humidity, shady rainforests, where it grows on steep rock surfaces, cliff crevices, and rocky gullies rather than in ground soil. Widely cultivated as houseplants, with many cultivars and hybrids.

Light
Bright, indirect light; avoid direct sunlight

Water
Let the top inch of soil dry out between waterings; water from the bottom of the pot by setting the pot in a shallow dish of room temperature water for 30 minutes, then removing and draining excess water; keep water off leaves and plant crown or they will rot

Soil
Use a lightweight, well-draining, African-Violet-specific potting mix in a small pot with good drainage holes

Temperature
65-80°F

Humidity
Tolerates average household humidity levels

Arrowhead Plant – *Syngonium podophyllum*



About
A vining plant native to tropical jungles of Central America and northern South America, where it crawls up tree trunks with its clinging roots. Popularly cultivated as an easy-to-grow houseplant, with cultivars in many different colors.

Light
Bright indirect sunlight; avoid direct sunlight as it can scorch leaves

Water
Allow the top one to two inches of soil to dry out between waterings; never let the plant sit in soggy soil to prevent root rot

Soil
Use a chunky, well-draining potting mix with lots of perlite or orchid bark

Temperature
60-85°F; protect from cold drafts

Humidity
Tolerates average to high household humidity levels

Notes
Benefits from some support, either a trellis or a pole to climb on

Western Redcedar – *Thuja plicata*



About
A large evergreen conifer tree native to the Pacific Northwest, where it grows in wet valley bottoms and mountain streambanks. Commonly grown as an ornamental tree around the world, with many cultivars on the market. It is also very culturally important to many Indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest, who use the tree for clothing, art, medicine, construction, and canoes. Its rot-resistant wood is still widely used in construction today. Wild trees can live to over 1000 years old.

Light
Full sun to part shade; young trees especially benefit from protection from intense afternoon sun

Water
Likes consistently moist soil, especially during the first few years and during dry spells

Soil
Prefers moist, rich, well-draining soil high in organic matter; a thick layer of mulch can help keep soil moist and roots cool

Temperature
Hardy to USDA zone 5

Notes
Not grown as a houseplant; gets very large and will not do well indoors

Small-leaf Spiderwort – *Tradescantia fluminensis*



About
A creeping perennial groundcover native to South America, where it thrives in damp gullies and riparian areas of tropical rainforests. Widely cultivated as a houseplant, but it has become naturalized in many areas and is considered an invasive species in some.

Light
Bright indirect light; avoid direct sunlight, but too little light causes leggy and pale growth

Water
Likes consistently moist but not waterlogged soil; let the top inch of soil dry out between waterings

Soil
Use a well-draining houseplant potting mix with plenty of perlite or coarse sand, in a pot with good drainage holes

Temperature
60-75°F

Humidity
Tolerates average household humidity levels, but higher humidity will promote lusher leaves

Notes
Trim off leggy stems to promote bushier, fuller growth; trimmed stems can be easily rooted in a glass of water and planted back into the pot or propagated

Zebra Plant – *Tradescantia zebrina*



About
A creeping herbaceous plant native to Central America, Colombia, and the Caribbean, where it grows in wetland and rainforest thickets. Widely cultivated both as a houseplant and a landscaping groundcover for its attractive striped foliage and quick growth. Classified as invasive in some areas where it has been introduced.

Light
Bright indirect light; direct sunlight can scorch leaves, but too little light will cause the leaf colors to fade and the plant to become leggy

Water
Allow the top inch of soil to dry out between waterings; never let the pot sit in standing water

Soil
Use a well-draining houseplant-specific potting mix

Temperature
60-75°F; protect from cold drafts and drastic temperature swings

Humidity
Tolerates average household humidity levels

Notes
Trim off leggy stems to promote bushier, fuller growth; trimmed stems can be easily rooted in a glass of water and planted back into the pot or propagated

American Wisteria – *Wisteria frutescens*





About

A woody climbing vine native to wet forests and streambanks of the eastern United States. Widely grown as an ornamental plant for its showy, highly fragrant blooms. Less aggressive than invasive Asian wisterias.

Light

Prefers full sun (at least 8 hours of direct sunlight per day)

Water

Young vines need consistent moisture; mature vines are moderately drought tolerant

Soil

Prefer moist, well-draining soil; can tolerate clay soil better than Asian wisterias

Temperature

Hardy to USDA zone 5

Notes

Will need a sturdy wooden or metal trellis or arbor to climb on, as mature woody vines can become quite heavy; blooms only form on new growth, so after flowering prune branches back to two or three buds per branch to encourage a second flush of late-summer blooms (and prune again in winter dormancy for more spring blooms)

Great Plains Yucca – *Yucca glauca*





About

A perennial evergreen plant native to the prairies of North America from Texas to Canada. Popular as a landscaping plant due to its exceptional drought tolerance and tall spikes of showy white flowers. The spiky leaves also make it very resistant to browsing by deer.

Light

Full sun; needs at least 6 hours of direct sunlight per day

Water

Extremely drought-tolerant; water moderately during the first growing season, then water sparingly only during prolonged dry spells

Soil

Prefers poor, sandy, or rocky soil with rapid drainage; heavy, wet clay will cause fatal root rot

Temperature

Hardy to USDA zone 3

Notes

Leaf tips can be incredibly sharp – plant away from walkways and high traffic areas; flowers and seed pods are edible, and the fibrous leaves can be used for textiles or rope

Zanzibar Gem – *Zamioculcas zamiifolia*



About
A succulent, rhizomatous plant native to eastern Africa, where it thrives in dry forests, grasslands, and rocky riverbanks. Widely cultivated as a houseplant for its attractive glossy foliage and tolerance of neglect.

Light
Bright indirect light for optimal growth; can tolerate lower light, but won't grow as quickly

Water
Let soil dry completely between waterings, then water thoroughly; consistently moist soil will cause fatal root rot

Soil
Use a fast-draining cactus or succulent potting mix, or a general houseplant mix with extra perlite and sand; use a pot with good drainage holes

Temperature
65-85°F; protect from cold drafts

Humidity
Tolerates average household humidity levels

Moss Garden



The conservatory moss garden includes nearly a dozen species of mosses and other moisture-loving species native to Montana:

- Waterside Feather Moss – *Brachythecium rivulare*
- Lindberg's Hypnum Moss – *Calliergonella lindbergii*
- Golden Feather-moss – *Campyliadelphus chrysophyllus*
- Rough Goose Neck Moss – *Hylocomiadelphus triquetrus*
- Golden Thread-moss – *Leptobryum pyriforme*
- Common Liverwort – *Marchantia polymorhpa*
- Ostrich-plume Moss – *Ptilium crista-castrensis*
- Pipecleaner Moss – *Rhytidiopsis robusta*
- Procumbent Pearlwort – *Sagina procumbens*
- Star Moss – *Syntrichia ruralis*
- Hook-leaved Fern Moss – *Thuidium recognitum*
- Austria Timmia Moss – *Timmia austriaca*

Moss Garden Care

Light

Most mosses prefer bright indirect light, such as near an east- or north-facing window. Avoid direct afternoon sunlight, as it can scorch the moss, but in a darker room it may need supplemental light. Too much light can cause algae to grow on the moss; if this occurs, rinse the moss gently and reduce light.

Water

Mosses absorb water through their leaves rather than their roots. They don't like to be waterlogged, but they should never dry out completely. Mist moss regularly with distilled or rainwater, as chlorine buildup from tap water can harm mosses. If using tap water, allow water to sit overnight to off-gas chlorine.

Soil

Use a well-draining, slightly acidic substrate like peat moss, amended with sand or layered over coarse gravel for extra drainage. Mosses can also be grown in pea gravel or attached directly to rocks or bark. Don't use fertilizer; mosses get the nutrients they need from water and their environment. Excess nutrients can cause algae to grow on the moss.

Temperature

Most mosses thrive at 65-75°F; protect from drafts, heaters, and vents.

Humidity

Mosses thrive in high-humidity environments; use a glass terrarium or a container with a partial lid to keep in moisture. But overly soggy or stagnant environments can also cause mold to grow on both the moss and the substrate. Allow occasional airflow (such as opening the container for a few hours) or introduce springtails, tiny beneficial insects that eat mold to keep the container clean.

Notes

Mosses have been around for over 450 million years and don't have true roots, seeds, or flowers. They can dry out completely during drought and survive long periods in this dormant state, but they will rehydrate and spring back to life in a matter of hours as soon as it rains.