

Thrillers, spillers and fillers

Indoor plants are an essential component of almost every beautiful interior. The natural greenery is a definite mood booster that brightens up our indoor spaces and it seems we just can't get enough of the lush green rainforest plants cascading down bookcases or stretching gracefully towards our ceilings. But we do struggle to keep the little beauties alive.

No one sets out to kill a houseplant, yet most houseplants are killed by kindness. Hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of gorgeous greenery is composted each year after it finally gives up the struggle of survival.

Remember too that it's not one single factor that will keep a plant happy, but the combined effect of them all. Let's have a look at some of the main considerations for keeping your interior plants happy.



Position, position, position.

You can be successful with houseplants from the start when you acquire the right plant for the right space. Don't try to grow a sun-loving plant in a dark room and don't put shade lovers in direct sun.

To accommodate better light levels, keep your leafy plants clean. Dust cuts down on the light necessary for photosynthesis, which feeds the plant. Use a rag and clean warm water or put the whole plant in the shower. This is a good way to remove pests such as aphids, mealy bugs, scale, and spider mites, too.

Less H2O.

Over-watering probably accounts for more plant deaths than any other single issue and is a more common cause of death than under-watering.

Use water that is room temperature.

If you use tap water, let it stand for a day or so to remove any chlorine from it. Even better is to use water that was used to boil eggs or vegetables.

Check the soil by testing it with your finger down to the second joint. If the soil is dry, water it. If it's wet, leave well



alone. If it's just moist, check it again in a couple of days. The sweet spot for each plant is different, so it pays to do a bit of research on watering. Unlike rain forest plants, some desert plants need to dry out between watering.

Humour the humidity.

To combat dry indoor air, put rocks or pebbles in saucers and fill with water. Be sure the bottom of the pot is not touching or standing in the water. Group plants together for more humidity, or run a humidifier or vaporizer.

A well-balanced diet.

Like any living organism, plants need to keep their nutrients up to grow and thrive. Carbon, hydrogen and oxygen is taken from air and water. Nitrogen to make chlorophyll, phosphorus for growth, potassium to regulate water loss, plus calcium and other minerals all generally come from the soil.

As the plant processes the minerals in the potting mix – these will eventually run out and will need to be replaced with



new growing points. Now that you are more familiar with the fillers and the spillers, we are left with the “thriller.”

It ensures peace of mind by keeping your plants in a superior condition, increasing longevity and improving their overall condition through the use of the controlled (intelligent) watering system.

How does it Work?

A prescribed amount of water is placed down the Fill Pipe and rests in the Water Reservoir. Just above, in the Deck, pumice stones are placed. These stones absorb the water, holding only what they can, ensuring a perfectly regulated water supply to the roots. As the roots draw water slowly from the pumice stones, the pumice will in turn draw more water from the reservoir, thus ensuring the roots never sit in an over-watered environment which results in root rot, disease and early death of the plant.

By the simple use of a gauge, you can ascertain when you need to fill up again which usually will be every two to three weeks. As easy as that!

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fresh potting soil – not garden soil or compost. Garden soil is normally too low on nutrients and compost may burn the roots.

Release the tangles.

When a plant outgrows its pot, the roots circle around inside the pot and start to restrict themselves. Pot bound plants often seem to dry out more quickly than normal, because the ratio of roots to soil is too large. It is best to remove it from the old container, cut back a third of the roots and replant into a slightly bigger container.

Cut away the old.

Late winter is the ideal time to prune your houseplants and remove brown and dead leaves to prevent disease. This allows the spring energy to be directed toward

