

INDOOR PLANTS FOR LOW LIGHT



Even if your home has little natural light you can enjoy the benefits of living with plants. Many varieties of houseplants fare well with just a limited amount of light. **While low-light plants generally don't bloom, they do stay green and vibrant year-round, some with almost no care or attention.** Here are 10 reliable options to consider.

Calathea, sometimes called Peacock Plant or Zebra Plant, has ornately patterned leaves, which can look like they've been painted on. Direct sunlight may reduce or eliminate the pattern. Calathea needs consistent moisture and grows best in humid conditions.

Chinese Evergreen is the common name used for houseplants from the Aglaonema genus. They're grown primarily for the thick, leaves which may be plain green, speckled, blotched with, or variegated. A mature specimen can reach up to 3 feet tall.

English Ivy is a vine with leaves that may be edged, speckled, or streaked with silver, gray-green, white, cream, yellow, chartreuse, or gold. Ivy vines keep growing longer, but you can prune them to almost any size as houseplants. Small-leafed, slow-growing types are easiest to maintain in small pots.

Ferns add an airy beauty to the dark spots in your home. You can choose from many species with foliage of different shapes, shades, and textures. Among the most popular choices for houseplants are autumn, bird's nest, maidenhair, and rabbit's foot ferns. Nearly all ferns thrive in humid conditions—place them in your bathroom or kitchen where they will benefit from the extra moisture in the air.

Mint family plants, which include oregano and lemon balm as well as peppermint and spearmint, produce a steady supply of fresh sprigs you can clip off and use in your meals all-year round, even in low light. The low-cost, easy way to get one of these plants is to get a cutting from a gardening friend and pot it up. Within a few weeks, it will be growing again.

Monstera is sometimes **called Swiss cheese plant** because its deep-green leaves develop a pattern of holes. The foliage is big, bold, and lush, bringing a tropical feel to your home. The plants typically have compact, bushy habits when they're young and as they mature they begin to show their vining nature. You can either give them some support to climb as they become tall and dramatic or you can pinch them to rein in the lankiness.

Philodendron refers to hundreds of species of foliage plants that often are touted for their ability to clean indoor air. The leaves are typically large, bright-green, and glossy. You'll find vining types that need a support structure to climb on, such as a wire trellis. Non-climbing types have an upright growth habit and are well-suited to windowsills.

Pothos show up on every list of the easiest houseplants for beginners, tolerating neglect and thriving even in dark rooms. Their shiny heart- or lance-shaped leaves come in shades of green, chartreuse, blue, or variegated patterns. The long stems spill over the sides of pots or climb by aerial roots that adhere to surfaces.

Snake Plant needs almost no light and very little water, yet the long, pointed, dark-green leaves with streaks of light green or white stay upright and rigid in any conditions. These slow-growing houseplants can eventually reach up to 6 feet tall.

ZZ Plant, or Zamioculcas zamiifolia, grows many thick stems with leaves coming out their sides from the bottom to the top. The fleshy, dark-green leaves are a couple of inches long and an inch or so wide. To keep the plant looking full and shaped well, prune off stems that arch over.



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Watering And Feeding

Most plants growing in low light do best with steady moisture, but they are more commonly killed by overwatering than underwatering. Be sure their pots contain a light soil mix with sphagnum moss or coir (*a by-product of coconut processing*) and have drainage holes so excess water can run out into a dish below the pot.

Before watering, push your finger into the soil up to your second knuckle. If the soil mix feels damp, don't water. When the soil is dry, water it well, then wait until it dries out again.

Most indoor foliage plants need fertilizer only once or twice a year, ideally in spring and summer when they are growing most vigorously. Use a dilute liquid fertilizer, such as compost tea or fish emulsion. Follow package directions carefully. Giving houseplants excess fertilizer can lead to rot or burning and may attract pests, such as fungus gnats.

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