

**WELLNESS**

# HOW HOUSEPLANTS CAN BOOST YOUR MOOD AND PRODUCTIVITY

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**RIDC**

I've always found houseplant care to be incredibly soothing and beneficial for overall wellness. Not only do they add a touch of greenery to any living space, but they also purify the air we breathe and can even boost our mood and productivity levels. Studies have shown that simply being in the presence of plants can reduce stress and anxiety, lower blood pressure, and improve cognitive function. Plus, taking care of my plants gives me a sense of purpose and responsibility, which can be beneficial for mental health. So if you're looking to enhance your overall well-being, I highly recommend bringing some houseplants into your home.



Here are seven of my current favorite plants that I've enjoyed taking care of the most over the past year.

## HERB & VEGETABLE PLANTS

This year is my first year attempting to grow vegetables, and because I live on the third floor of an apartment, I've had to come up with creative ways to make things work: herbs in hanging baskets and veggies in large plastic totes. Growing vegetables doesn't have to be expensive. The next time you buy any type of produce, try drying out the seeds and planting them into an extra pot of soil.

- Basil. Basil tends to be an extremely hardy plant that will grow in less-than-ideal conditions. Rather than trying to remember to buy individual leaves from the farmers' market, I grew my own from seed. The best part is that the leaves grow back after I cut off the tops, so I have a near-endless supply.
- Habanero peppers. I don't have any peppers yet, but watching these leaves grow is satisfying enough. I love looking at their pillowy texture, especially when the wind picks up.



**BASIL**



**HABENARO PEPPERS**

## AIR PURIFYING PLANTS

If I had a dollar for every time someone said "You must have the cleanest air at your place" . . . let's just say I'd be retiring much sooner than anticipated. In a way, they are correct because these three plants are significantly better at removing toxins and releasing oxygen into their surroundings. And although it would take MANY plants in a concentrated area to cause a noticeable difference in air quality, they are all very satisfying to care for just the same.

- Aloe vera. My aloe is just a baby but still demanding much attention. Aloe loves high levels of light, and because of the succulent leaves (meaning they hold on to water longer than other plants/plant parts do), I don't water it as often as I do the rest of my plants.
- Snake plant. Snake plants in any form are likely the most popular way to add greenery to your home. Just remember to put them somewhere close to a window (contrary to popular belief, low-light tolerance doesn't mean no light at all).
- Peace lily 'Domino.' A variegated version of the much-loved peace lily that is very popular with grandmothers, it has similar growing requirements, but the splashes of white add a little more interest.



ALOE VERA



SNAKE PLANT



PEACE LILY

## FAST GROWING PLANTS

Many of my favorite plants put out new leaves almost every week because they historically tend to grow quicker or have multiple plants in a single pot. This instant gratification gives me something to look forward to and reassures me that I am properly caring for my plants.

- **Monstera deliciosa.** My Monstera is currently putting out a new leaf, and watching it unfurl more every day is my new obsession. The number of fenestrations, or slits in the edges of the leaves, is a visual representation of the plant's maturity.
- **Heart-leaf philodendron.** Vining philodendrons and pothos can grow like weeds if you let them. To get an even fuller pot, I enjoy propagating a vine in water for a couple of weeks, until there's about an inch of new growth, and replanting it into the same pot.



MONSTERA



PHILODENDRON

# IN CONCLUSION

Having houseplants around is a great way to improve your home as well as your health. It's cool how much of a difference a little nature can make. The last thing I want to leave you with is that plant care isn't one-size-fits-all. Releasing the idea that plants have to be this perfect image of health similar to what I was seeing online took a great deal of weight off my shoulders. I'm sure that if you look back at the pictures of my plants, you can find some brown edges, yellow leaves, etc., but they are proof I'm learning how to feed myself, nurture life, and be reminded daily that intrusive thoughts don't matter.

I can't always "go touch grass" but I can at least touch my leaves.