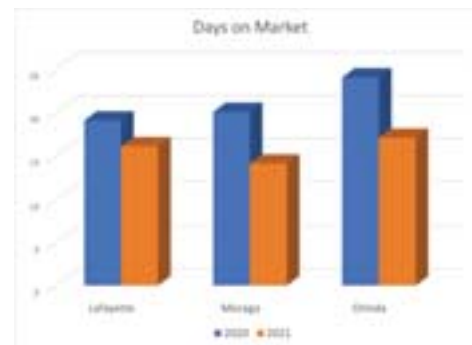


Lamorinda

OUR HOMES

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The Real Estate Year in Review

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Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Houseplant housemates



Photo Cynthia Brian

Maintain consistent moisture with anthuriums and prayer plants

By Cynthia Brian

“Having plants in your house is a natural way to continuously clear yourself!” ~ Doreen Virtue

Forty-five! That’s the number of houseplants that filled my tiny dorm room on the seventh floor of Hedrick Hall during my freshman year at UCLA. Every shelf, box, windowsill, wall hook, desk, and floor space were filled with a container sprouting something green. I had gone from being surrounded by nature on the farm to living in a high rise in the concrete jungle. My body, mind, and spirit craved a garden. I created an indoor oasis of easy-care houseplants that helped me breathe better in those days when Los Angeles was clogged with smog.

Eighteen! That’s the number of potted plants that currently grace my indoor space. The number doubles if you count containers on my

porch and balcony. Most of my family of plants have been with me for decades. I have a fiddleleaf fig that began as a small specimen in a one-gallon pot that now towers to 15 feet in my hall. A precious peace lily that was gifted to me when “Chicken Soup for the Gardener’s Soul” hit the New York Times bestseller list currently inhabits a nine-square-foot corner of my family room. An original four-inch size variegated bromeliad birthed pups and is a focal flora in my living room. My lucky bamboo growing in water peppered with pebbles soars three feet or more.

With winter keeping us from digging outside, indoor plants offer a way to garden in inclement weather while adding beauty to your interior décor. Even better than the attractiveness that plants bring to our designs, they are air-filtering workhorses as well. Air quality has become a big buzzword during the COVID pandemic. Through the process of photosynthesis, plants convert the carbon dioxide we exhale and also remove gases from the air through a process called absorption. Back in 1989, a NASA report concluded that household plants could provide a “promising economical solution to indoor air pollution.” A 2020 study published in the Journal of Environmental Management indicated that it would take a green wall to improve the health index of an interior environment. No matter which is truer, one thing is certain, being in nature as well as being surrounded by houseplants lowers our blood pressure, reduces stress, and improves mental health.

Numerous specimens make excellent houseplants. A few of my favorites include orchids, bromeliads, aloe, peace lily, snake plant, spider plant, pothos, dracaena, croton, fiddleleaf fig, dieffenbachia, anthurium, parlor palm, arrowhead plant, and lucky bamboo. All of these are very easy to maintain, offer gorgeous greenery, and can live for years with minimal proper care.

To grow healthy, happy plants that will provide endless enjoyment and attractiveness, these elements are necessary.

1. Provide the correct amount of light. Before you purchase any houseplant, look around your home for your light conditions. Some plants need bright light in a south window, others prefer the low light of a north-facing window. Some like it hot, some like it cool. Do your homework.

2. Water cautiously. Many houseplants drown from over-watering. The lucky bamboo is one rare specimen that thrives in water. Make sure that you have adequate drainage in all containers.

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