

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Houseplant housemates



Leek growing in water. Photos Cynthia Brian



Orchids add beauty and elegance to any room and will re-bloom.



Lucky Bamboo will grow in water or soil and thrives in low to medium light.

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Put gravel or small pebbles at the bottom of the pot. Poke a chopstick or pencil into the soil. If it comes out soggy, do not water. If it is dry, offer hydration to your plant friend. Plants may dry out more quickly in winter when forced air heaters are operating. Most plants may require water once a week or less.

3. Fertilize according to directions. Stop feeding plants in the winter. Start again in the spring. Leafy green plants will need nitrogen, plants that flower want phosphorous.

4. Eradicate bugs. Placing a clove of garlic in the soil is a great way to keep your friend bug-free. To kill bugs, place a clove of garlic in the soil. Mealybugs, aphids, and scale can be removed with a spray solution of water, alcohol, and dish detergent. The solution can also be rubbed on the leaves. Make sure to let the soil dry out if fungus gnats appear.

5. Maintain humidity. Cacti enjoy dry conditions; however, most plants prefer 50% humidity. In winter, our homes tend to be drier. If containers can be lifted, add a saucer of pebbles filled with water to increase the humidity, or spray with a fine mist. Another idea is to take your plant into your bathroom or shower.

6. Trim spent blossoms and dead leaves. When flowers are finished

blooming, or leaves die, remove them as soon as possible to allow for new growth.

7. Other things. Always read the instructions on care before making a purchase. Turn all houseplants a quarter turn at least once every two weeks to maintain their shape as most will reach for the sunlight.

If you receive plants as gifts, make sure to remove wrapping to allow for good drainage. Living Christmas trees need to be moved outdoors. Depending on the size, you may be able to use the tree for next year's holidays. Or you may need to transplant your tree into a larger container to keep on your patio. If you are going to plant it in the ground, determine the placement carefully as these trees will grow into very large evergreens with expansive roots.

One final interest of mine that is an educational and exciting experiment for children is rooting vegetables in a glass of water on a windowsill. Avocados, fennel, scallion, green onions, potatoes, sweet potatoes, and leeks grow quickly. Refresh the water daily. I currently am growing leeks and continue to use the green tops in my cooking.

With a little effort, your interiors will be healthier and more stunning with the introduction of living greens. Bring nature indoors with you while enjoying cleaner air living happily with your organic artistic housemates.

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing.