

Hedy's corner: a discussion on house plants

Objektyp: **Group**

Zeitschrift: **Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand**

Band (Jahr): **33 (1970)**

Heft [11]

PDF erstellt am: **22.07.2024**

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HEDY'S CORNER:

A DISCUSSION ON HOUSE PLANTS

Anyone who travels around the world with open eyes marvels at the unique beauty in the lands which are 'home' to other people, and the nature-lover particularly is drawn to flowers and plants which surround and decorate homes. He notices the profusion of flowers in gardens, on terraces and balconies, in hanging baskets, in window-boxes and on window sills.

If we do not incorporate some plant beauty within our homes we are depriving ourselves of great joy, interest and value. Think of the profusion of geraniums with which the Swiss decorate their private and public buildings. Think of the scented hyacinth grown indoors, spreading its perfume everywhere.

There is nothing better that we could include with our home furnishings than the living plant—its colour, texture, form, perfume, cool comfort and direct contact with nature. House plants are the least expensive for beautifying our homes and they comprise potted plants, cut flowers, garden window plants, artificial and dry arrangements. Whichever kind, it deserves an appropriate and harmonious place in our home.

How shall we care for our indoor plants?

1. **Choose containers** large enough to hold sufficient moisture, are suitable for the occupied space and which have balance and stability to prevent upsetting.
2. **Ask the nurseryman** or friend from whom you obtain a pot plant as to the preference of such plant, the amount of light, moisture, warmth, or air humidity.
3. **Keep plants free** of dust by sponging with lukewarm water or by spraying with water from tap or hose.
4. **Protect plants** as much as possible from impure air such as tobacco smoke, cooking or heating gas fumes (plants react to such fumes before humans detect them). Some ventilation without exposing plants to chilly air is helpful.
5. **Caution:** There are several house plants which have been found to be poisonous. We should familiarise ourselves with all plants which fall under this category and avoid their use, specially where there are children.
6. **How to keep plants alive** whilst on holiday: Permanent indoor plant box.—It helps to have some moss incorporated with soil and pebbles on the top to retain moisture. A good soaking would then ensure sufficient humidity. Large pot plants could be stood in old drums with some water in them. A good soaking and subsequent covering of earth around the plant with plastic is another idea. Smaller pot plants survive happily in the bathtub standing in very shallow water.

—Swiss Garden Expert.