

The Grapevine

Houseplant Appreciation

I absolutely love plants of all kinds but I especially love my houseplants. My husband often jokes that it might be more of an obsession than a hobby but he still buys me more on occasion so apparently, I can't be that bad. January 10th is National Houseplant Appreciation day and it reminds us that even though our holiday decorations might have been taken down, we don't have to lose the freshness and vibrancy that our houseplants can bring to our house during the winter months.

Houseplants do more than just add color to our lives they can improve our health. Research has found that having plants can reduce stress, boost positive emotions and relieve physical discomforts. Still other studies have shown that patients in hospital rooms with views of nature and plants recover faster than those without a view. Some houseplants can also help improve the quality of your sleep and help the air quality in your house. Snake plants in particular have been shown to emit oxygen and improve the air quality in the rooms around them.



Some other benefits of houseplants include improved concentration. Many offices have houseplants in them because they add aesthetic beauty to the space and to improve productivity. If your boss gives you a hard time for your office having plants everywhere, you can offer a reason why you need to keep them. Humans, even though many of us live in urban environments, are innately drawn to nature, both for beauty and for peace. When I'm having a rough day nothing makes the day better than working with my plants or taking a walk through a greenhouse. There is something calming about being in that environment.

There are so many benefits to having houseplants in your life. Even if you have a black thumb with houseplants there are tons of easy to grow plants that can brighten up your home. You might even be able to grow your collection without spending a dime by trading cuttings of plants with fellow plant lovers. My love of houseplants has definitely grown during the COVID pandemic through trading and gifting. Happy Houseplant Appreciation day to you!

Reminders-

- During warm spells this winter, be sure to water newly planted trees and shrubs in your landscape. Even trees that have been planted in the last 2-3 years will benefit from some watering during the winter. An easy method of watering is to take a 5-gallon bucket, drill a 1/8" hole in the bottom and place the full bucket near your tree to let the water drip out. After it empties move it to the other side of the tree and fill it again. Be sure to try to water at least 12" into the soil if you are using a sprinkler system. Deeper watering is more important than frequent watering to encourage the new root system to grow.
- If you are using seed collected from your garden or seed you purchased that is more than a couple years old, I would do a germination test with the seeds now before we start planting. To test germination, place several seeds between layers of damp paper towel and place in a plastic bag. Keep the paper towel damp and check the seeds for germination over the next two weeks. Remove seeds as they germinate and at the end of the two weeks figure out how many seeds germinated vs didn't.

Upcoming Events

- *January 13th at 6 pm: Garden Gossip- Seed Starting & Houseplant Propagation*
Do you struggle to start seeds at home or transition them outside in the spring? Have you always wanted to start new houseplants but have had issues getting them to grow? Join us for the first Garden Gossip workshop on Seed Starting and Houseplant Propagation. Participants will receive Houseplant starts to take home. Class will be offered in-person, via Facebook Live and a recording will be available. Register at: https://kstate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1GqKiI6nZ9NbSwC