

Happy Office Plants Make You Happy

Plants and life and comfort to your office space, and improve air quality. Here are some good options for your office of different shapes and sizes that are on the easy side to maintain.

ZZ plant – *Zamioules zamiifolia*

Description: A plant that requires very little light, hardly any water, and will thrive on neglect. Good for travelers or brown-thumbed folks — a people-proof oxygen producer.

Sun: ZZ plants do best in bright to moderate, indirect light but also thrive low light. While ZZ plants can take direct light, you could see some scalding on the leaves.

Care: ZZ plants will do better if you leave them alone! ZZ's have bulb-like roots, meaning they only need water once a month or when the soil has dried out. It can even go for 2 months and sometimes is happier doing so!



Fiddle Leaf Fig (aka It plant) – *Ficus lyrata*



Description: Tall, columnar and sculptural, with big violin-violin-snapped leaves. Good for those tight corners. It's a tough plant that adapts easily to conditions, but avoid drafts.

Sun: Bright consistent light, preferably by a sunny window. Turn the plant every few months once it begins to lean toward the light.

Care: Water only when soil is dry to the touch. Then water thoroughly (until the water drains into the saucer) and allow to

dry out again. Some find them hard to keep alive. Typically, the culprit is lack of bright, filtered light. As a native to the tropics, Fiddle Leaf Figs thrive in warm, wet conditions, which aren't always easy to provide indoors. Make sure the sunny window is properly sealed. Figs are used to the still, warm conditions of the rainforest. Drafts from windows, doors and air-conditioning units may cause its leaves to dry out and drop.



White Bird of Paradise – *Strelitzia Nicolai*

Descriptions: With dramatic, long, arching leaves, this plant can really make a tropical statement even if you're socked in for a long winter. In the South, it's grown outdoors and produces funky-looking inflorescence that look like a bird's head, giving it its name; but it won't bloom inside. The plant creates a beautiful silhouette if shine a light on it.

Sun: Lots of sun. Put it in a very bright spot.

Care: Due to its high-light requirement, this plant is a moderately heavy drinker. Thoroughly wet the soil with each watering and let it dry down to moist before watering again. Sub-irrigation (watering from the bottom through a reservoir) can be very helpful in reducing the frequency of watering.

Split-Leaf Philodendron – *Monstera*

Description: This plant has beautiful large deep green heart-shaped leaves with perforations. It can get quite large, so keep that in mind when deciding on placement.

Sun: It can survive in relatively low light, but prefers some filtered sunlight from a nearby window — thriving in medium to bright light, where the leaves will develop their characteristic heart shape and deep splits. In low-light conditions, the leaves won't split. Too much harsh sunlight can result in scorching, but if it doesn't get enough the plant may not develop as many perforations in its leaves.

Care: The plant needs warm interior temperatures of at least 65 degrees Fahrenheit (18 C) or warmer. Plant in a peaty, well-draining soil in a pot with drainage holes. Water when the top quarter-to-third of the soil feels dry to the touch.

As an outdoor plant, this a vining tree with tasty fruity — inside it won't do either. However, manually



attaching it to virtually anything and it will grow “up”; or it is happy to maintain itself as a floor plant without any support provided you trim it.

Maintained as a floor plant (not allowing it to climb), it can easily be moved to and from a good light source.

Sweetheart Vine – *Philodendron Cordatum*

Description: This elegant vining plant is a versatile workhorse. It comes in several color variations from standard green to neon as well as variegated. One of the easiest plants to care for, it tolerates high to low light levels and can withstand a missed watering or two!



Sun: This plant does best if placed in indirect light. Keep out of direct sun. Bright diffused light is preferable.

Care: Allow to dry down completely in low to medium light between watering, but not to the point of wilting.

Bird’s Nest Fern – *Asplenium nidus*

The bird’s nest fern plant gets its name from the fact that the center of the plant resembles a bird’s nest. It is also occasionally called a crow’s nest fern. Bird’s nest ferns are identified by their flat, wavy or crinkly fronds. Their appearance can bring to mind a seaweed plant growing on dry land.



Sun: They grow best in medium to low indirect light. A bird’s nest fern that receives more light will have more crinkled leaves, while one that receives less light will have flatter leaves.

Care: Under ideal circumstances, all ferns would like to have consistently moist, but not wet, soil. However, part of the reason that bird’s nest fern makes an ideal houseplant is that it will tolerate soil that dries out from time to time. Furthermore, this plant does not require the same level of humidity that many other kinds of ferns need, making the care for a bird’s nest fern far more forgiving to the occasionally forgetful houseplant owner than other ferns.



Blue Star Fern – *Phlebodium Aureum*

Description: The ‘Blue Star’ has been blessed with an unusual powdery blue color that appears as a beautiful, silvery aqua. Simple to care for, it requires low, indirect light (less than your average fern) and even moisture. To keep the fronds looking clean and unblemished, place a humidity tray underneath its pot, or group the plant with others to increase humidity levels.

Care: The blue start fern does well in the lower light conditions found in most interiors. It enjoys moist soil, so it’s hard to overwater this one!

Sun: This plant tolerates low light. Place it in indirect light toward the center of the room.



Snake Plant (aka Mother-in-law’s Tongue) – *Sansivieria*



Description: Also known as the ‘Mother-In-Law Tongue,’ this plant is hands-down the easiest indoor plant to care for, thriving in even the most difficult interior settings. Most varieties have the added bonus of upright vertical growth, which lends itself well to modern or minimal design themes.

Care: This plant can go weeks between waterings with no long-term ill effects – perfect for frequent travelers!

Sun: The snake plant can tolerate almost any level of light – great for offices or desks without a window.



Kangaroo Paw Fern – *Osorum Diversifolium*



Description: This forgiving fern has an abundance of shiny emerald green fronds year-round. It is an easy care plant that is attractive on a desk, in a hanging basket or set on a table in a pretty pot. As a compact variety it only reaches about one foot in height and is happy in any level of light. It can spread out to 2-3 feet in width. Its sprawling rhizomes often trail out of its container, adding extra interest to its appearance.

Sun: This plant prefers medium to bright indirect light.

Care: Water when the top half of the soil has dried. Give the plant enough water so that it drains out the bottom drip holes



Air Plant – *Tillandsia*

Description: A genus of evergreen, these currently popular plants are perfect for coffee table or for those with an already-cluttered desks. They don't require soil and come in tiny sizes, meaning there's always room for one more. Larger ones look great as solos.



Sun: Air plants prefer bright filtered or indirect light (or fluorescents!). Periods of direct sunlight are ok, but more than a few hours of sun will dry them out — they shouldn't be baking all day.

Care: Dunk in a bowl or mug full of water once per week to keep them happy and thriving. Make sure they are totally submerged for a few hours, even overnight, and that they dry after the dunking. They need air — avoid the temptation to put them in terrariums.



Orchids Orchidaceae

Description. Orchids are a diverse and widespread family of flowering plants, with blooms that are often colorful and fragrant. They are a way to bring flowers to your office without having to replace them weekly. Most orchids bloom once a year, but if they are really happy, they may bloom more often. If you want an orchid that blooms during a particular season, the best bet is to purchase a plant that is in bloom at that time.



Sun: Some prefer sunny south-facing windows and others filtered light. It's best to read the directions that come with the plant when you purchase it for what type of sun it prefers and for watering directions.

Care: Are orchids difficult to grow? Many of them are. In fact, some are almost impossible to keep alive, much less bring into bloom—even for professional growers. But there are dozens of varieties of orchids, and hundreds of hybrids, that are perfectly happy growing on a sunny windowsill. For your best crack at success, start by choosing one of the less fussy varieties that is adapted to the type of growing conditions you can provide.

Most orchids can tolerate drought far better than they can tolerate excess moisture. Nothing kills an orchid faster than letting it sit in a water-logged pot. Without adequate air circulation, the plant will suffocate and die.

When an orchid does flower it usually remains in bloom for six to ten weeks. If you don't want to care for the plant after the blooms have fallen, compost them and buy another. They are available at local groceries for no more than a bouquet of flowers.

