

**SPOTLIGHT**

Fuss-free indoor plants

WHO doesn't love indoor plants? It's always refreshing to have a few of Mother Nature's representatives around the home. Not only are they great looking, they are also good for your health as they encourage oxygen circulation in the house. However, while the idea of indoor plants may be appealing, the reality is not always exactly the same. Plants need a lot of tender loving care to survive, and not everyone has the patience to do so.

But there is good news for the lazy (or busy) plant lovers out there. There are some plants which won't give up without a fight, and can survive under the most basic of care. Star Lifestyle brings you a list of plants which will thrive in your home against all odds.

Interestingly, we seldom know the name of the indoor plants we buy from the nursery. They are usually identified under the umbrella-term of "house plants," and involve a lot of heavy description to get someone to recognise them. So don't worry too much if you can't tell what the plants listed below look like; rather, you can search for the following plants in books or the Internet, find images of the plants, and then refer to those images when you buy go shopping for the house greeneries.

ALOE VERA: Aloe Vera plants prefer dry soil, and hence do not require frequent watering. Aloe Vera gel, which can be derived from the plant by cutting a part of the leaf off and

slicing through it, is also a very handy beauty product, with uses ranging from an ingredient in hair masks for soft hair, to a healing balm for bruised skin. With upright, spiky leaves of a dull green and lots of personality, Aloe Vera is the plant for you if your home décor leans toward the rustic and the ethnic.

CACTUS: True to their form, cactus plants are blessedly low maintenance. The adorable, small cacti available in tiny pots are a great accessory at your study table or the office desk. You only have to water them once a week or so. Make sure your cactus gets some sunlight though; as a plant that originated in the desert, it needs its regular dose of sun rays. Cactus plants complement bright colours really well.

SNAKE PLANTS: Snake plants have long leaves with yellowish borders and a snake-like print in the middle. These plants are known to be almost indestructible. Add small pebbles in abundance to your snake plant pot to add an ele-

ment of interest to your plant. The upright leaves popping out of the pebbles will look quite unique.

SPIDER PLANTS: Spider plants also have spiky, long leaves which are soft and bend downwards, hence resembling the tentacles of a spider. Spider plants come in a number of varieties, and they work well as hanging plants because they droop downwards when the leaves grow longer. They grow well with evenly moist soil and bright or medium light.

IVY: "Ivy" refers to those plants which have small, circular leaves in high frequency. Usually found in small pots on side tables in the living room, where they grow out of their pot and trail down over the edge. Like how it looks in your friend's house? You can easily cut off a stem and plant it in your

own home. Ivy prefers moist soil and cooler room temperatures, so avoid putting it under direct sunlight.

By Mehereen Aziz

Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed

