

# A PET PLANT



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*Ever wanted a pet but you were too afraid to take care of it or had financial issues? Ever wanted a pet that did nothing all day and aquariums would take up space or platypi were too irrational to get? I have an eco-friendly solution to both: why not consider getting a pet plant? You might be thinking that plants are not pet material. Read on to be proven wrong.*



## CHOICES

The toughest decision you'll need to make is getting the right plant. The aptly named creepers have no sense of privacy and I don't advise getting one. Tubers show signs of growth underground, and are uninteresting without a see-through container. If you have pet birds, I suggest killing two with one stone by planting bird seeds. You don't have to buy bird seeds in the future if you cultivate it and you get to keep both pets. Money plants are a popular catch these days on the false premise it will bring you money. Cacti are trendy desktop buddies that have large watering cycles, but are very aggressive towards foreigners. Why can't the cactus be more socially and racially accepting?

Fruits and vegetables take a lot of space and wouldn't be classified as pets but more of what cows are to farmers.

Take into consideration the plant's life-span, how big it gets and if it's poisonous or not.

## GETTING STARTED

A tabletop plant will cost no more than Taka 100 from roadside vendors. Exceptions include bonsai, which is extremely rare and costly. I wouldn't recommend getting a bonsai as it is high maintenance and a huge hassle overall (it still is pretty good looking and will teach you kung fu).

For whatever plant you get, read up on how to take care of them. I had a cactus a few years back and never watered it to the point when it started to wilt. I then gave it water everyday and it died. Speaking of plant experiences, check out the environment you put it in. My bird seed plant used to get attacked by pigeons day in and day out. My tomato plantation used to be congested, and infested with snails.

Once you get your desired plant or seed and its pot (optional), you are ready to commence Phase 2: accepting them as pets.

## PLANT = PETS?

As per the dictionary, pets are animals, birds, etc. to keep you company instead of work or food. Notice the etcetera?

Just like every other pet, plants require names. Please don't be that guy who names their plants Trent, Groot, Flowey, Twiggy or Woody. That is demeaning and degrading. How would you feel if someone called you names based on your human appearance (or lack thereof)? Khan the Sunflower sounds way more impressive than Sunny the Sunflower. Also, plants are gender ambiguous so any name works.

Always buy from trusted plant dealers, since the shadier variant deals the wrong kind of green.

## PLANT LIFE CYCLE

In a lot of ways, plants are very similar to humans. They start off as a sweet and inno-

cent sapling, and then they start climbing up to become a self-sustaining adult. Except this adult hasn't gotten a job yet and still needs your attention. What you need to look after is when the plant goes into its teenage rebellious years. This is when it starts inviting all sorts of pests like aphids and other insects, much like when a human starts getting zits. And when the time comes, you'll need to give your plant 'the talk'. Yes, I'm talking about the flowers and the seeds.

## HELPING THEM GROW

Plants are simple and only need water, sunlight and carbon dioxide; which are available everywhere. Research has shown that plants grow differently with music they listen to, so you could experiment with rock or hip hop. Plants need minerals, but they usually get them with your normal tap water. Pests are often a huge pain, and even plants get diseases that turn leaves brown. Yikes.

Getting a big plant has its consequences, such as moving it from one pot to another as it reaches adolescence. You should take into account the space the roots need.

## UPS AND DOWNS

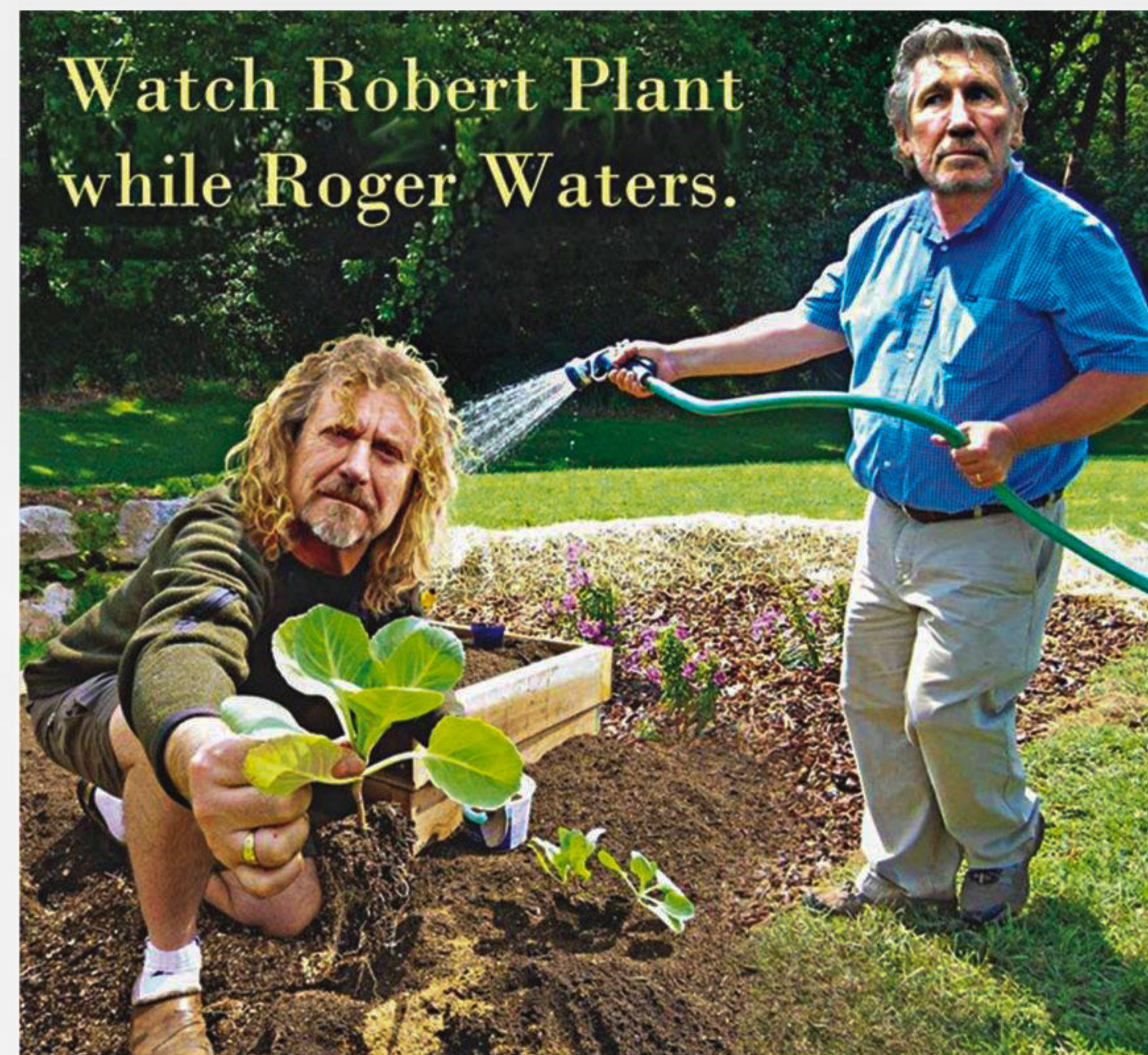
Plants are great companions that are avid listeners and don't talk back. They don't move around so there is no fear of losing them. They produce oxygen which will keep your dull room lively and they don't require



any feed. On the downside, they will produce carbon dioxide at night which has a chance of killing you while you sleep. Keep your eyes open at all times.

Do you have running tapwater that keeps you awake at night? Keep your plant underneath and benefit from not watering for the rest of the day (not recommended).

If you plan to grow herbs and spices, such as mint or basil, you get the benefit of putt-



ing your pet in your food. However, I don't advise you do this with your other pets, like dogs for instance. Dogs often mind if you eat them.

Plants are poor when it comes to being therapy animals, unless you grow aspirin or something.

## ADDITIONAL EXPENSES

Plants really don't require any additional expenses. The plant holder might as well be any plastic container, a popular example would be a water bottle cut in half. Fertiliser is not really required and can be homemade (you know how). It's always nice to put stickers around the container, or even cute little signs with "keep off the grass" on them. If you get pesticides, make sure it doesn't harm your plant or makes it an intelligent life form. We don't want a sentient grass monster, now do we?

## EXPLAINING TO YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Now this part is usually a huge deal with all plant owners. Your friends are highly likely to not be cool when you come out of the closet as someone who pets plants. Sure it's weird to call plants names and encourage it with kind words, but who has the right to judge you for that?

The process is simple. To get your friends to like you for the plant addict you are, you need to appeal to the audience. For example;

if your friends are Potterheads, you can play a clever pun like "Hey look it's Harry *Pot-ter*" and point to your potted plant. Of course, there is a high chance you will be met with criticism and ridicule but who would you choose: your unappreciative friends or your free-loading plant?

## AROUND THE HOUSE

Here comes the part that's most challenging, getting a plant inside the house. Chances are that your plant gets kicked out to the balcony. But with proper persuasion, your pet can get an exclusive spot near the window sill.

This is just the start to the uphill battle. Plants are vulnerable to domestic abuse, like your sibling breaking the pot or over-watering it when you're gone. I can't begin to comprehend the horrors the plant must face by just sitting in the same spot all the time. So you must take your plant out for a walk every now and then to escape the harsh living conditions of the balcony. Popular plant walking areas include the outskirts of Bashundhara, Banani Park and Hatirjheel.

## ENDNOTE

*Plants are wonderful and boring creatures. If you can relate to that, go ahead and get yourself a pet plant.*

