

READER SUBMISSION

Why You Need Plants In Your Home

ANINDYA SAHA

My love for plants bloomed when I was a little child who could barely speak. Those little green leaves and variations of colorful flowers still make my heart fill with joy everytime I see them.

Imagine waking up on a Friday morning, and it's a little cold outside. You just took the newspaper from your doorstep. Your tea is ready. You go and sit next to your plants. With a sip of your tea, you start reading the paper and enjoy the atmosphere on a different level. Being an anthophile has its perks.

Living in a city full of noise and dust can be extremely stressful. However, having a little corner of green in your balcony or room can help you relieve some of that built up stress. A little glance towards the plants after a hard day may prove to be extremely calming. I have two little guys, a cactus and a money plant, on my study table, who cheer me on with their aura as I take my boring quizzes and write some long assignments.

As a plant parent myself, I have many kinds of plants on my balcony, window and other corners of my room, with mostly flowering and a few beautiful non-flowering plants. Seeing them grow on a daily basis, little by little, is an extremely satisfying experience. Even saw some of them die, which I can assure you, is really heartbreaking to witness.

If you are a bibliophile, you'll find plants to be a great companion to be lost in a strange other world with. If you are a bookstagrammer, you'll find it pleasantly surprising to find how well books and plants pair in photos. Plants can also keep you in check, as I have found out. The spider plant next to my massive to-be-read book pile gives me a scary look whenever I buy a new pile of books and add them to the to-be-read pile.

Buying new plants is an exciting experience in itself. Visiting your local plant shops can be a good way to spend quality time. To me, it feels more like an adventure. Whenever I visit these shops I find new types of plants every single time, and somehow end up buying more. You can't blame me! That small plant with tiny red flowers and that little guy with round leaves were really cute.

In terms of watering and caring for your plants, you have to be very careful. Some of your plants will die before you know it. So, if you are a beginner, I would recommend you to start slow and purchase some basic plants first. Cactuses, Lucky Bamboos and Peace Lily are great plants to start with.

Plants are freaky. You put this tiny seed in some dirt and eventually it's big. But seeing them grow and then coloring your home with a little bit of green can be exciting and fun.

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PHOTO: **LS ARCHIVE**



Get rid of your fear of public speaking

AYRA AREEBA ABID

Many of us out there do not want to speak up in front of an audience. However, you realise it is also important to sometimes get out of your comfort zone in order to get a better result at your endeavours. So, you try, and as your audience is impatiently waiting for you to voice out your words, you realise you're tongue-tied.

Here's a small guide on how to overcome the fear of public speaking or at least pretend to seem confident while you speak.

UNDERSTANDING THE SOURCE OF YOUR FEAR

Fear of public speaking is more common than you think. It may stem from a fear of judgement, embarrassment, rejection, or any combination of these things. Whatever the reason may be, it is important to understand the sources of such overwhelming feelings and eradicate them before the fear takes a turn for the worse.

You might have experienced people sniggering at you during presentations the time you were in school. May even have been a strict teacher looking disinterested. Whatever your reason may be, make sure to brush them off your head, especially before your speech.

BEING PREPARED

I cannot emphasise this enough. This pointer might seem obvious but I've seen my peers not bringing their best-prepared selves, especially during group projects.

Research your content as much as possible, without limits. Have a proper speech ready and revise it as much as you

can. Read it out in front of the mirror, and then when you're a little more confident, practice in front of your siblings or parents, while holding as much eye contact as possible. This might rack up your confidence level and help reduce your nervousness.

FINDING A FAMILIAR FACE

When you are in a room full of people, find someone you can make eye contact with. This can be someone who seems friendly and or are smiling and especially someone you know. With time, it becomes easier to become comfortable, ease up, and then you can slowly make eye contact with everyone else in the room.

BONUS, IF YOU WEAR GLASSES

If you happen to wear glasses, keep them off while you speak. This usually works like magic for me because it gives us the power to temporarily forget the faces of the people in front of us.

For people who have perfect vision, just look indifferent while you speak and avoid the gaze by looking on top of their heads. Now, there's no way you would be constantly conscious of your audience judging or even laughing.

Stand tall, literally and figuratively, to lower down your stress levels. Give yourself a pat on the back every time you speak in front of an audience. The fear itself will soon dissipate.

Ayra Areeba Abid's favourite word is 'serendipity' and she likes to speak against any form of discrimination. Connect with her at areeba.ayra@gmail.com