

# HOME

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# POTTED PLANTS

*Houseplants you'll grow to love* by MARTY JONES

LIVE PLANTS MAKE A HOUSE a home, and houseplants have some great health benefits, too. They can filter toxins from the air and increase humidity, which is important in countering the effects of a dry mountain environment. Plus, during the long winter season, houseplants can bring a sense of joy and liveliness into a room for a much-needed psychological boost.

Not all houseplants are foolproof, however. Live plants need ongoing monitoring, maintenance, and care for successful year-round growth. Different plants have different light, water, temperature and fertilizing requirements, so before adding a plant to your space, take some time to evaluate its environmental conditions, and then choose a plant that

pair well with those findings.

Houseplants also can be integrated into a home's décor for lively results. Consider choosing eye-catching containers or pots that will complement your style. And look for unexpected ways to display plants, such as in a vertical wall planter arrangement along a hallway or in hanging glass globe terrariums hung in front of a window. Display

one standout houseplant as a focal point on a table, or cluster small potted plants together in a thoughtful, creative design.

Use this shortlist of common houseplants that grow well in the Vail area to inspire a first-ever houseplant purchase or to help you identify some new additions. Beyond their health benefits, these five houseplants will likely become living elements you'll grow to love.

Snake Plant



## SNAKE PLANT

**Genus: Sansevieria**

With dense leaves that spiral upward from a central base, snake plant provides vertical interest and bold stripes of color. Like a skyscraper, its leaves reach towards the sky to offer a silhouette that's architectural in nature. Snake plant can grow up to three feet tall, but its leaves usually remain only a few inches wide. This houseplant is most commonly found in its striped, or variegated, form with vertical yellow and light green color stripes that serve to highlight its vertically elongated form.

Snake plant is considered an easy-care houseplant because it can adapt to different light conditions, and it can even tolerate growing in low-light areas of a room. It grows best when it goes dry between waterings, so in the winter months snake plant will likely need to be

watered only occasionally.

Display snake plant in a simple pot or container so that the plant itself can take center stage.

## DRAGON TREE

**Genus: Dracaena**

Plants that belong to the genus *Dracaena* resemble small trees or shrubs, and although they take on a variety of forms, *Dracaena marginata* is often grown as a hardy, easy-care houseplant. Commonly called dragon tree, it has a thick trunk-like stem and slim, spiky leaves that are solid green in color or striped with varying colors of green, yellow and red.

Dragon tree grows best in bright, sunny areas, but direct sun will scorch its leaves. Since it's a drought-tolerant plant, let soil go dry between waterings. While dragon tree is known to filter impurities from the air, its leaves are toxic to cats and



Dragon Tree



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Pothos Plant



dogs, so if you have a pet that likes to munch houseplants, steer clear of the dragon tree. As dragon trees grow, their bottom leaves will yellow and fall off, so don't be alarmed, as this is part of its normal growth process. Since dragon tree can

grow up to six feet tall, choose a large and attractive pot that matches the style of your home.

**POTHOS PLANT**

**Genus: Epipremnum**

Pothos makes a great first-time houseplant, as it's one of the

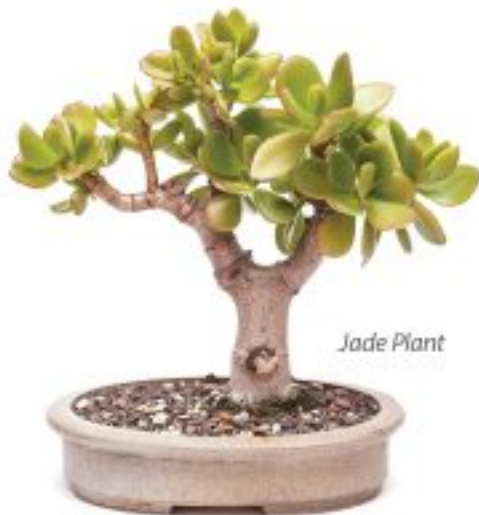
easiest plants to grow indoors. The bright green leaves of pothos are heart-shaped and can vary in color from solid green to speckled or variegated in various shades of yellow, white and green. Pothos naturally grows as a leafy vine, which can attain great lengths. However, it's possible to prune pothos vines for a more compact, bushy plant.

Pothos grows best in bright, indirect light, but it adapts to a variety of light conditions, and it can also tolerate erratic watering, so if you temporarily forget your plant care duties, then pothos might be more prone than others to survive in your space. If you like the look of vines, consider displaying pothos in a hanging planter to show off its cascading vines. But if you prefer a more streamlined look, prune pothos frequently to keep its vines in check.

**JADE PLANT**

**Genus: Crassula**

Jade plant is a gorgeous slow-growing succulent that often becomes a centerpiece houseplant. Like other succulents, the jade plant grows well in dry environments and has thickened or fleshy leaves and



Jade Plant



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stems that have the capacity to store water efficiently. Jade plants are known for their bright green leaves, which may also have a yellow or red tint around the edges.

A warm, sunny room is the best location for a jade plant, but be careful of placing it in direct sunlight, as its leaves can burn. Test the jade plant for watering by gently squeezing a leaf. If it feels squishy, it's ready for watering, but if the leaf is firm, wait to water. For a beautiful jade plant that will grow and thrive for decades, repot when its size crowds its current container, and prune it to maintain a compact shape.

## FERNS

### **Genus: various**

If you want to add texture and color to a space, ferns can be a good choice, as most varieties have beautifully patterned arrangements of leaves and a bright green color. Button ferns and Boston ferns

have the classic fuzzy-textured, arcing fronds full of small leaves often associated with ferns, but the staghorn ferns have deep green wide-leaved fronds and can be planted in exciting ways, such as on a wall or in a hanging planter.

Ferns are among the oldest plants in existence, and thousands of different types of ferns exist, but most prefer to grow in areas with at least a little humidity. For this reason, a bath or shower area that has a window can be a great place for a fern, where it can absorb humidity from the room. But check ferns regularly for watering, and keep the soil moist. Also consider misting a fern's leaves with water to help it retain moisture. Contrary to popular belief, not all ferns grow well in low light conditions, so do a bit more research on the particular variety that interests you in order to place it in an optimal environment for growth.



Fern



Marty Jones is the owner and manager of Colorado Alpines & Wildflower Farm in Edwards. Marty has lived in the Vail area since 1973, and his work with Colorado Alpines & Wildflower Farm has inspired extraordinary landscapes and gardens in the Vail Valley and beyond. Marty can be reached at [marty@thewildflowerfarm.com](mailto:marty@thewildflowerfarm.com).



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