# 6 Inexpensive Grow Lights for Indoor Plants



Growing plants indoors is great. However, when plants are grown indoors, they often do not receive enough natural sunlight to meet their needs. This is where grow lights come

in. Of course, you can choose to spend a lot of money on grow lights. However, you don't have to do that. There are some great options for inexpensive grow lights for indoors plants.

## What Are Grow Lights?

Grow lights are special lights designed just for plants. They emit a range of light wavelengths, including red and blue light which are important for photosynthesis. Grow lights can be used as the only source of light for indoor plants. However, most of us have at least some natural light in our homes, especially during the warmer months of the year. Therefore, most of us are seeking inexpensive grow lights for indoor plants that supplement that existing natural light.

## Types of Grow Lights

Before we get into the most inexpensive grow lights for indoor plants, let's look at the different types of grow lights along with their relative costs. The first three on this list are the most common options and the latter three are alternatives that some people prefer.

## Fluorescent Grow Lights

Fluorescent lights are a popular choice for indoor growers due to their affordability and energy efficiency. They come in two main types: T5 and T8. T5s are more efficient and produce more light per watt than T8s. Fluorescent lights emit mostly blue light, which is good for vegetative growth. However, they don't emit as much red light, which is needed for flowering. Fluorescent lights are generally the most inexpensive grow lights for indoor plants. They typically cost anywhere from \$20 to \$200.

## **LED Grow Lights**

LED grow lights are becoming increasingly popular among indoor growers due to their energy efficiency and versatility. They emit both blue and red light, which is important for both vegetative growth and flowering. LED lights also produce less heat than other types of grow lights, which can be beneficial for certain plants. The cost of LED grow lights varies widely, but they tend to be more expensive than fluorescent lights, ranging from \$50 to \$1000 or more. Still, there are some good inexpensive grow lights for indoor plants in this category. In fact, they are a preferred choice over fluorescents for most people.

## High-Intensity Discharge (HID) Grow Lights

HID lights are the most powerful grow lights available and are commonly used by commercial growers. They come in two types — one better for flowering and one better for vegetation. HID lights can cost anywhere from \$100 to \$1000 or more. Moreover, they tend to cost a lot to operate, so your utility bill will go up when using them. These aren't your best choice.

#### Ceramic Metal Halide (CMH) Grow Lights

CMH grow lights are a relatively new type of HID light that uses ceramic arc tubes instead of quartz. CMH lights are also cooler and more durable than other types of HID lights. However, they can be more expensive than other types of grow lights.

#### Plasma Grow Lights

Plasma grow lights are another type of HID light that uses plasma technology to produce a full spectrum of light. They are highly efficient, producing more light per watt than other types of grow lights, and have a long lifespan. However, plasma grow lights are among your most expensive option.

## **Induction Grow Lights**

Induction grow lights use a high-frequency magnetic field to generate light. Therefore, they are highly efficient and long-lasting. They emit a full spectrum of light and are a good option for indoor growers looking for a low-maintenance and energy-efficient grow light. However, induction grow lights are also among the most expensive options.

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With all of that in mind, the most inexpensive grow lights for indoor plants will be fluorescents and some LED options. That said, arguably the <u>LED lights are the better choice for most gardeners</u>. Here are some good choices:

## 1. LORDEM Plant Grow Light

This is a 72 LED Full Spectrum Grow Light. Therefore, it's good for most plant types. It's highly adjustable in terms of plant height and has a long cord to make it easy to set up indoors. Amazon sells this for about \$20.

## 2. Yadoker Plant Grow Light

This one is almost identical to the previous suggestion including the price point.

## 3. GooingTop LED Grow Light

This one is designed with a clip so that you can clip it onto a table and adjust the light accordingly over tabletop indoor plants. According to Amazon, it is "equipped with 10 Red + 74 White LEDs, this growing Lamp is similar to the full-spectrum

sunlight at noon." Moreover, it comes with a one year warranty. It sells for about \$35.

## 4. Aokrean Grow Lights for Indoor Plants

This is a cute little stand on which you set your flower pot. The light can be adjusted up to 26" to accommodate different pot sizes. It's a stylish option that looks kind of similar to the Ring Light for humans. They are sold individually but you get a much better deal if you get a two pack. Pay abut \$25 for two.

## 5. Mosthink LED Plant Grow Light Strips

Most of the inexpensive grow lights for indoor plants are little lamps like the ones above. However, you can also get glow light strips. These can be a great way to give the proper light to multiple plants in one area of the home. This one is 13" long and you get a two pack for under \$20. However, you can also find ones that are longer if you need to cover more area for your plants.

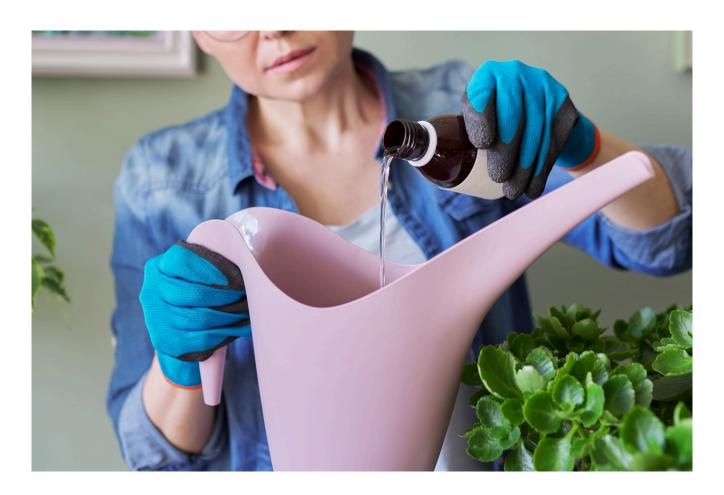
#### 6. DOMMIA Grow Lights for Indoor Plants

In terms of aesthetics, I really like this option. It's a panel that looks a bit like a sunburst or stars. You can place the panel like a shelf on a multiple-shelf plant stand, illuminating the plants below it on that particular shelf. An entire set of these looks really striking. And, of course, it gives your plants the light that they need to thrive. This costs about \$20 per panel.

#### Read More:

- Edible Plants You Can Grow Inside
- <u>Cheap and Effective Liquid Nutrients For Your Indoor</u>
  Plants
- 5 Quick Tips to Rescue Your Plants from Root Rot

## Cheap and Effective Liquid Nutrients for Your Indoor Plants



If you're a plant enthusiast, then you know that your indoor plants require a balance of light, water, and nutrients to thrive. While water and sunlight are easy to provide, it can be challenging to find the right liquid nutrients for indoor plants without breaking the bank. Fortunately, there are plenty of cheap and effective liquid nutrient options that you can make at home. Here are some of the most popular options:

## Compost Tea as Liquid Nutrients for Indoor Plants

Compost tea is one of the most popular DIY liquid fertilizers for indoor plants. This isn't tea, per se. Instead, it's a means of creating a tea-like liquid of steeped compost.

To make compost tea, you'll need to gather some compost and a container to brew the tea. Fill the container with water and add the compost. Use a ratio of one part compost to four parts water. Stir the mixture well. Then, cover the container to keep out pests. Let the "tea" brew for several days, stirring occasionally. After several days, strain the liquid through a fine mesh strainer or cheesecloth to remove any solid particles.

Once you've made your compost tea, you can use it to water your indoor plants. Be sure to dilute the tea with water before using it, as it can be quite potent. Once again, use a ratio of one part compost tea to four parts water. So, yes, add water again. Then use the diluted "tea" as liquid nutrients for your indoor plants. Most plants want this added about once per week. However, it obviously depends on which plants you have.

## Fish Emulsion as Nutrients

Another popular DIY liquid fertilizer is fish emulsion. Fish emulsion is made by mixing fish waste with Molasses to create a nutrient-rich liquid fertilizer. Fish emulsion is an excellent option for indoor gardeners who want to provide their plants with a boost of nutrients without spending a lot of money.

To make a fish emulsion, you'll need some <u>fish waste</u>, <u>molasses</u>, <u>and a container to mix</u>. You can use any type of fish waste, including fish guts, heads, and bones. Place the fish

waste in the container with the molasses. Let the mixture sit for 21-30 days. After several weeks, strain the liquid.

Once you've made your fish emulsion, you can use it to water your indoor plants. You want to dilute 2-5ml of fish emulsion in 1 liter of water.

You should apply it during the vegetative stage of the plant (between the germination stage and flowering stage). Spray it in the soil once a week.

#### Seaweed Extract

Seaweed extract is another popular option for liquid nutrients for indoor plants. Seaweed extract is made by soaking dried seaweed in water to create a nutrient-rich liquid fertilizer. To make seaweed extract, you'll need some dried seaweed and a container to brew the fertilizer. Place the dried seaweed in the container and cover it with water. Let the mixture sit for several days, stirring occasionally. After several days, strain the liquid. Again, dilute with a ratio of one part to four parts water.

## Eggshell Water

Eggshells are rich in calcium, which is an essential nutrient for plants. To create a liquid fertilizer from eggshells, start by collecting your eggshells. Rinse them thoroughly to remove any remaining egg whites or yolks. Then let them dry completely. Once the eggshells are dry, crush them into small pieces.

Next, add the crushed eggshells to a container of water and let it sit for several days. The water will become infused with calcium from the eggshells, creating a nutrient-rich liquid fertilizer. Wait 3-7 days. Then strain the mixture. Add water, again about a 1:4 ratio, to create your liquid

## Vegetable Water

When you boil vegetables, many of the nutrients leach out of the vegetables and into the water. Instead of pouring this water down the drain, you can use it to fertilize your indoor plants. This is a great option for frugal gardeners who are interested in sustainability. It helps prevent the waste of that water while also helping you to grow your plants.

To create vegetable water fertilizer, start by boiling your vegetables as usual. Once the vegetables are cooked, strain them out of the water and let the water cool. You can then use this nutrient-rich water to fertilize your plants. You can also freeze the vegetable water in ice cube trays and use them as a slow-release fertilizer. This is especially great if you'll be going on vacation and leaving your plants alone for a short period of time.

## Urine as Liquid Nutrients for Indoor Plants

Okay, this might not be the right choice for everyone. Nevertheless, urine is a free resource that will indeed work as a plant nutrient if you are bold enough to try it. While it may sound unappealing, urine is actually a rich source of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium. These are all essential nutrients for plant growth.

To create a liquid fertilizer from urine, start by collecting your urine in a container. You can use any clean, empty jar. Once you have collected your urine, dilute it with water at a ratio of 1:10 and mix well. You can then use this mixture to water your indoor plants, making sure to apply it evenly to the soil around the plant. Be careful not to get any on the leaves or stems of your plants, as this can cause burning.

Using urine as a liquid fertilizer may not be for everyone, but it is a unique and effective option that is free and readily available. It is important to note that if you are taking any medications, you should consult with your healthcare provider before using your urine as a fertilizer, as some medications can affect the composition of urine and make it harmful to plants.

## It's All A Type Of "Tea"

As you can see, there are plenty of cheap and effective liquid nutrients for your plants that you can make at home. They're all made creating a sort of "tea." You choose the nutrient-rich item that you want as your base. Then your boil it, steep it, strain it, and dilute it. After that, you're ready to use it!

Compost tea, fish emulsion, seaweed extract, eggshells, and vegetable water are all excellent options for creating nutrient-rich liquid fertilizers. By experimenting with these DIY options, you can find the perfect liquid fertilizer to meet your indoor plants' needs without breaking the bank. Just remember to dilute the fertilizer with water before using it and to avoid over-fertilizing your plants, as this can cause damage and potentially harm your plants.

#### Additional Links:

- 5 Reasons to Use Fish Amino Acid on Your Plants
- 2 Homemade Fertilizers You Can Sell
- Should I Use Enviro Ice on My Plants?

## Ponytail Palm Plant



ponytail palm behind the couch on the left, image via Unspash @stephwilll

I recently discovered a plant that I hadn't ever known before. It's called the ponytail palm. However, it's not actually a palm tree / plant at all. Instead, it's a succulent. And yet it looks just like a tiny little palm tree. It's adorable. I don't know why I've never come across this plant before. Now that I know about it, I'm seeing it everywhere.

## Discovering the Ponytail Palm Plant

Every month, my best friend and I try to get together at his place for what we call "wine and whine." It's just a friendship catch-up day of conversation and wine drinking.

Recently, his apartment has been taken over by plants. It's funny, because neither of us was ever really good with plants. We used to live together and I don't think we ever had a living plant in our shared apartment. I once bought him and his husband a bonsai tree, and I don't think it lasted a few months.

And yet, in recent months, my bestie has taken up indoor gardening. He's loving it. He's good at it!

So, as I've been going over there, his plant collection has grown. There were a few simple plants. Then there were some more complicated plants. He has plants that are on a weekly misting schedule. He waters other plants every few days. Over time, he has even repotted plants.

One of his most recent plant acquisitions, as you may have guessed, is the ponytail palm plant. He found it at a store while looking for new pots. He fell in love with it, he purchased it, and that's how I discovered it, sitting in the corner of his home.

## A Plant By Any Other Name ...

My bestie actually introduced me to the plant as an elephant foot tree. You can see why when you look at it. After all, the trunk sure does look a lot like the foot of an elephant. However, I actually mis-remembered it as an elephant palm. It looks so much like a little palm tree. So, when I went to Google it and learn more about it, I typed in "elephant palm" and what came up was the ponytail palm tree.

According to the <u>University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture</u>, this plant's official name is *Nolina (Beaucarnea) recurvata.* We most commonly know it as the ponytail palm. However, you might also refer to it as a bottle palm. And, like I said before, people sometimes call it the elephant foot tree.

## A Palm, A Tree, A Succulent?

The ponytail palm looks like a palm tree. And yet, it's not. Old Farmer's Almanac explains that it's more closely related to a Joshua Tree or a Yucca Tree. No wonder I'm drawn to this plant. I grew up in the Arizona desert. Therefore, I'm very familiar with these types of plants. I wouldn't immediately think of the Joshua Tree when looking at the ponytail palm. Nevertheless, I see the family resemblance.

And, did you know, that the Joshua Tree isn't a tree at all? It's part of the agave family. And this, in turn, is a type of succulent. I've always loved succulents. That's probably also the desert in me. So, again, no surprise that I found myself drawn to this plant.

## How Big Is a Ponytail Palm Tree?

My friend's new little plant is less than one foot tall. That's partly why I like it so much. It's this tiny, cute little palm tree in a pot inside of the apartment. However, as I did my research, I learned that these plants can actually grow to be quite huge. According to The Almanac, they can grow naturally in the wild to 30 feet in height with leaves that extend six feet long.

Of course, they don't get that large when cultivated in a garden. Moreover, when grown indoors, they will remain quite small. They're usually only about four feet tall when grown indoors. So, it will be interesting to see how tall my friend's plant will get. We will get together once a month and I can watch his baby grow!

## 5 Tips for Caring For a Ponytail

## Palm Tree

Since this isn't my plant, I don't actually have to worry about caring for it. That's my friend's job. And yet, I was curious about what kind of care it needs. Between my friend's information and what I found online, here are the five best tips I have for taking care of an elephant foot plant:

## 1. Lots of Light

This makes sense for succulents, of course. They want a lot of sunshine.

## 2. Fast-Drying Soil

Likewise, these aren't plants that want to sit in water. They don't want to be very wet. Use a fast-drying soil that's good for cacti and succulents. Keep the soil relatively dry even when watering. The top soil should be completely dry before you water the plant again.

## 3. How to Water a Ponytail Palm

Basically, you want to soak the soil so that it gets wet all through it. However, you want to use a pot with draining holes. Moreover, you want to make sure that the excess water all drains out. You don't want wet soil for this plant. This can't be reiterated enough, according to the Internet.

#### 4. Room Temperature

The plant likes to be kept in room temperature. However, make that room a little bit chillier in the winter months. Your plant will thank you. That said, don't let the plant sit too close to windows with cold air. You want a plant that recognizes it's a little cooler during winter, but you certainly don't want to freeze your plant.

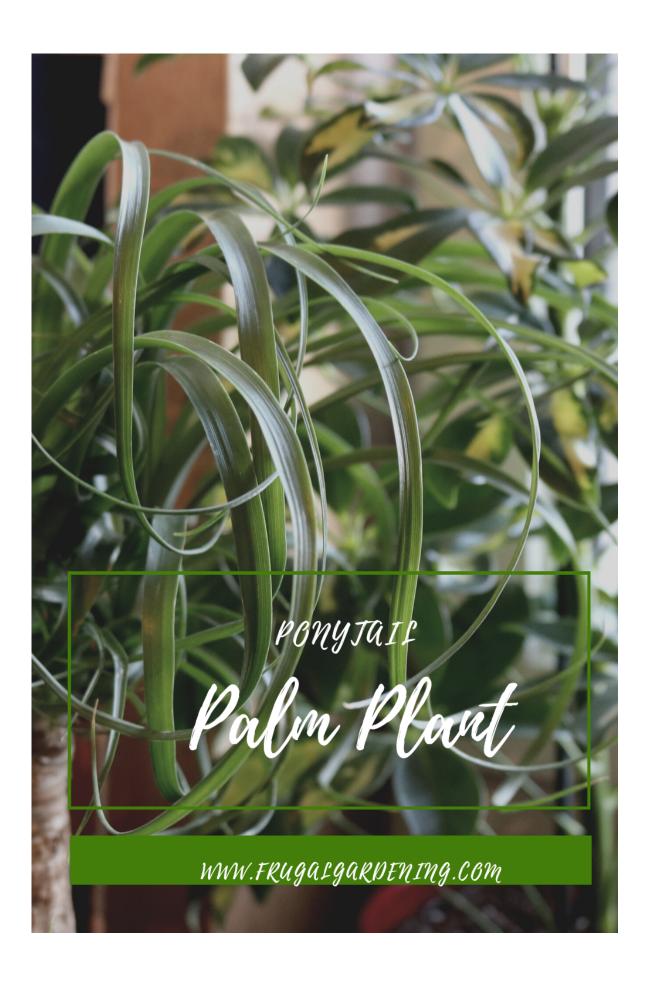
#### 5. Repot Every Year or Two

In order to keep the plant small, all that you really need to do is keep taking care of it in its small pot. However, you'll still need to repot it. Doing so once every year or two is ideal.

## Are Elephant Foot Plants Trending?

I didn't know about these plants until I saw my friend's recently. And yet, now that I know about them, I keep spotting them everywhere. For example, I went to a little store on Haight Street that only had a few plants among many other things and there one was! Is this a case of noticing what you're focused on? Or are these plants actually trending now?

Are you familiar with the ponytail palm tree? What do you call it?



#### Additional Links:

- <u>5 Quick Tips to Rescue Your Plant from Root Rot</u>
- The Christmas Cactus Plant
- <u>5 Things to Consider When Recycling Soil</u>

## 5 Affordable Indoor Plants That You Might Also Get for Free



If you are looking for ways to improve the aesthetic of your home without spending a lot of money, you should consider indoor plants. Not only do they make your home look more

inviting, but many of them can also be obtained for free!

Follow along as we discuss 5 affordable indoor plants that you might also get for free.

#### 1. Aloe Vera

Aloe Vera is a succulent that is known for its ability to heal cuts and burns. These plants are easy to care for and can be obtained for free from many friends or family members who have them growing in their homes. The next time you're visiting with someone that loves indoor plants, inquire about Aloe Vera. You may get lucky and walk away with some Aloe Vera of your own.

#### 2. Snake Plant

<u>Snake plants</u> are another easy-to-care indoor plant that can often be obtained for free. These plants get their name from their long, snake-like leaves and can grow to be quite large. If you have a friend or family member who is looking to downsize their indoor plant collection, see if they would be willing to part with a snake plant or two.

## 3. Spider Plant

<u>Spider plants</u> are a type of flowering plant that is known for their ability to purify the air. These plants are easy to grow and can often be found for free at plant swaps. If you're looking for an indoor plant that will not only improve the aesthetic of your home but also help to purify the air, a spider plant is a great option.

#### 4. Boston Fern

Boston ferns are a type of fern that is known for their ability to thrive in humid environments. If you have a

bathroom with little natural light, a Boston fern would be a great addition. Many people tend to have several Boston ferns in their homes and sometimes hanging on their front porches. A kind ask can score you one of these indoor gems for free.

## 5. Peace Lily

Peace lilies are a type of flowering plant that is known for their ability to thrive in shady areas. If you have a room in your home that doesn't get a lot of natural light, a <u>peace lily</u> would be a great option. These plants are also known for their ability to reduce airborne toxins, making them a great choice for any home.

If you're looking to improve the aesthetic of your home without breaking the bank, consider adding some of these plants to your collection.

Do you have a favorite indoor plant that didn't make our list? Let us know in the comments below!

#### Read More:

4 Frugal Ways To Set Up a Greenhouse

Best Garden Instagram Accounts for Inspiration

6 Gardening Tips For Beginners

# Inexpensive Alternatives To Grow Lights



Grow lights can be a really helpful tool for indoor gardening. Many people find that they are worth their cost. However, they aren't cheap. Therefore, you might want to consider some of these inexpensive alternatives to grow lights.

## What Are Grow Lights?

Grow lights are exactly what their name says: lights designed to help plants grow better. As you might guess, these aren't just any regular light, though. You can't just turn a desk lamp on to your plants and assume that they'll grow better as a result. Instead, plants need light that's similar to sunlight. Grow lights use particular colors from the light spectrum to help your indoor plants grow.

## Inexpensive Alternatives To Grow

## Lights

There are several good inexpensive alternatives to grow lights. However, it's important that when you look at these cheaper alternatives, you make sure that you're choosing the right ones for your plants. There are different types of grow lights, with different intensity and energy efficiency, etc. Do your research to find out what works best with your particular setup.

## 1. Fluorescent Lights

Hydroponic Way suggests using fluorescent lighting as one of the best inexpensive alternatives to grow lights. They note that they generally don't emit a lot of heat, which is important. A light bulb that burns too hot can burn your plants, doing the exact opposite of helping them to grow! However, because they don't burn too hot, they also don't burn too bright. As a result, they don't produce enough light for some plants to grow well. Do your research to find plants that will grow well under fluorescent lighting.

## 2. LED Grow Lights

There are actually many different types of grow lights on the market. Some are more expensive than others. If you want to purchase grow lights made for your indoor garden but don't want to spend a lot of money, then consider purchasing LED grow lights. They're easy to find. Moreover, they're energy-efficient so they won't run up the cost of your home electric bill.

## 3. Halogen Lights

Hydroponic Way notes that these are not the most efficient option. However, if you already have halogen lights or you can get them affordably, then you might want to see if they work well for your indoor garden.

## 4. Incandescent Light Bulbs

Today's Homeowner notes that you can use incandescent lighting bulbs as grow lights. However, as aforementioned, they burn hot so they have the potential to burn your plants. As a result, make sure that you keep the lights further away from the plants than you would with the other types of alternative lights. They note that a nice option is to combine incandescent lights with fluorescent lights because each emits a different type of light on the spectrum, giving your plants a better balance for good growth.

## 5. Sunlight

Obviously, the sun is the best light source for your plants. If you can skip the grow lights and use nature, then that's your best option. It's free, after all. Of course, you might not have the choice to grow all of your plants outdoors. Or you might want to enjoy indoor gardening during months when it's too cold for plants outside. If you can set plants up near windows that get the right amount of sun, this is still your best option.

#### Read More:

- Seed Starting on a Budget: Germination
- <u>6 Tips to Revive Wilted Plants</u>
- Natural Plant Dyeing: Colorfast vs. Fugitive Light Dyes

## 8 Uses of Baking Soda in

## **Gardening**



Baking soda is one of the most amazing, affordable products available to us. Hopefully, you're already using baking soda for cleaning throughout your home. If not, then you're spending more money than you should on household cleaners. And today let's talk about how baking soda's benefits don't stop there. There are so many uses of baking soda in gardening. Here are eight big ones:

## 1. Baking Soda for Soil Testing

Everything that you grow needs to grow in suitable soil. The soil's pH level is one of the most critical factors. Therefore, you should do <u>soil testing</u> before you plant. Baking soda provides an easy, cheap way to do that. Here's what to do:

- Take a tablespoon of soil and place it in a container.
- Add a little bit of distilled water until the soil is mud.
- Add a little bit of baking soda.
- Watch.
- Does the soil fizz? If so, then your soil has an acidic pH level.

Bonus tip: If the soil doesn't fizz with baking soda, then you should do a second test. Take a fresh tablespoon of the soil. Add distilled vinegar to it. If it fizzes now, then your soil has an alkaline pH level. However, if neither the baking soda nor the vinegar cause fizzing, then you have soil with neutral pH.

## 2. Boost Your Plant Fertilization

<u>Balcony Garden Web</u> has several great suggestions for using baking soda in gardening. For example, they suggest adding baking soda to fertilize slow-growing, dull-appearing plants. They say that you should mix one teaspoon of baking soda and

Epsom set with 1/2 teaspoon ammonia in one gall of water. Then add approximately one quart of that solution to each plant you want to fertilize. You should see them grow faster and brighter in no time.

#### 3. Make Your Tomatoes Taste Better

This is one of my favorite tips from Balcony Garden Web. They explain that if you simply sprinkle a little bit of baking soda around the base of your tomato plants, you'll be able to grow sweeter tomatoes. How is this possible? The soil absorbs the baking soda, lowering the natural acidity levels of the plant itself. Baking soda costs so little and yet it can work so much magic!

#### 4. Get Rid of Garden Pests

It's always so difficult to decide how to handle garden pests like worms and slugs. Some of them don't do that much damage and you might decide to leave them alone. Others, however, can wreak havoc in your garden. If you don't want to lose your plants, then you have to find some way to deal with them.

Baking soda can provide a solution. It's eco-friendly and generally kind to your plants. However, it works as a pesticide. You can put it directly on slugs and gnats to kill them. Alternatively, you can make a solution that you spray on your plants to keep pests away.

## 5. Uses of Baking Soda on Plant Leaves

Did you know that if you have indoor household plants, you're supposed to clean them? That's right, household dust can settle on them and ruin them. A baking soda solution is a simple way to clean those leaves.

Even outdoors, though, you might find that baking soda helps the leaves of your plants. For example, a baking soda solution can help prevent fungus growth on plant leaves.

## 6. Add Baking Soda to Cut Flowers

Do you grow flowers in your backyard garden? If so, then perhaps you sometimes cut them and put them in a vase for yourself or to gift to others. Make those flowers last as long as possible by adding just a little bit of baking soda to the water inside that vase.

## 7. Deodorize Compost

Hopefully, you have compost for your garden. It's such a waste if you don't. However, the smell of a compost pile might have deterred you. If that's the case, then baking soda can come to the rescue. Just sprinkle a little bit on top of the compost regularly. The smell will go away. You can then reap all the benefits of composting in your garden.

## 8. Cleaning Around the Garden

The plants are the most important part of your garden. However, they're not the only part. You have gardening tools, statues, chairs, etc. Make sure that you keep all of these things clean for the best garden experience. Baking soda makes a great natural cleaner for all of these.

#### Read More:

- 100 Alternative Uses for Baking Soda
- How to Use Baking Soda for Weed Control
- How I Feel About the Hunting of Garden Pests

# Indoor Plants That Produce Soothing Aromas



For over a year now, many people have spent more time indoors than usual. The bonus? More time to admire your indoor plants? The downside? Well, truthfully, there are a lot. But plant-

wise, it's probably realizing that most of your pretty plants don't do much to refresh the stale air in your home. So add these indoor plants that produce soothing aromas to your space to freshen up your living quarters.

## **Set Realistic Expectations**

A lot of people have unrealistic expectations about what their houseplants can do. No, adorning your home with plants won't remove every single airborne toxin. And while these indoor plants that produce soothing aromas can help deliver a dollop of fragrance, they won't envelop your home in a floral perfume. Tamper your expectations. Because these plants won't replace your trusty air freshener, placement is key. Save these plants for walk-by areas so you can enjoy a pleasant whiff as you pass by.

#### Most Herbs

Most herbs are easy to grow <u>indoors</u> and have a strong scent. The type of herb you choose obviously depends on your scent preferences. Keep in mind that herbs require a bit more maintenance than many popular houseplants. You'll have to water them more often and harvest the leaves to prevent flowering.

Keep herbs near the kitchen, so they're easy to grab when you're cooking or plating.

#### **Eucalyptus**

You can grow eucalyptus indoors, but dried eucalyptus branches are even easier to deal with. You can style them in a large vase or hang them in the bathroom. Then, when you take a shower, the humid space will fill with a burst of freshness.

#### Scented Geranium

Not all scented geraniums are made equal. Some give off more pungent smells that are better for outdoor growing and keeping away mosquitoes. But there are also plenty of geraniums that give off pleasant aromas like lemon and chocolate.

These plants need lots of light and some pruning to keep their shape. They also like consistent <u>moisture</u> levels.

#### Citrus

A little trickier to care for than most houseplants, citrus plants like lemon, lime, and grapefruit, produce fragrant blossoms with a heavenly scent. You'll need to give these plants plenty of light and adequate humidity levels. Keeping them away from drafty parts of your house is also key to preventing stress-related problems.

#### Hoya

I've currently got a little hoya plant on my office bookshelf, but it's not even close to big enough to produce flowers. When it eventually blooms, though, the blossoms will give off a subtle, sweet scent. To bloom, hoya needs a lot of light, so keep it in a bright area. Water only once the soil has dried up between waterings.

#### A Word of Caution

Many scented plants are bad news for pets, and some can even be harmful to humans. So if you have cats, dogs, or other domesticated animals wandering about, be sure to check whether a plant is toxic before putting it within reach of curious noses and mouths. Want to find out if a plant is poisonous? Check out the ASPCA's list of toxic and non-toxic plants.

#### Read More:

- Where to Buy Seeds for Microgreens
- How to Get Plant Spacing Right
- A Frugal Gardener Is a Patient Gardener

## 10 Top Reasons Why Seeds Don't Germinate



There are a lot of reasons why seeds don't germinate. Knowing what can go wrong is the first step in solving the problem. If you're struggling to start seeds this spring, here are a few

## Why Aren't Seeds Germinating?

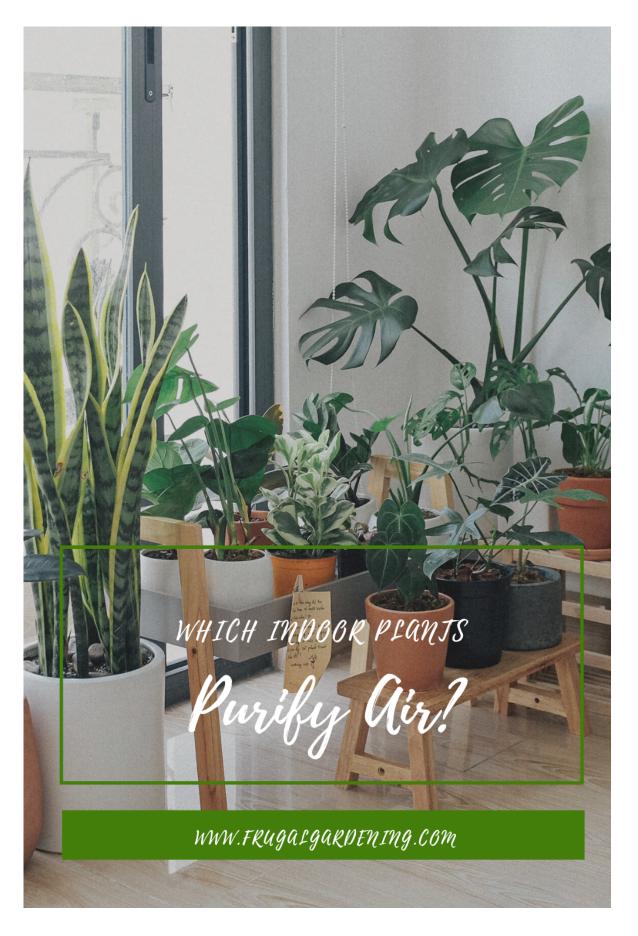
Here are a few common reasons why seeds don't germinate.

- It's too hot. It's a common misconception that seeds require heat to germinate. Not all seeds like it hot. Some germinate best when the soil is cool. The ideal temperature for lettuce seeds, for instance, is between 40 to 85 degrees Fahrenheit. Closer to 80 degrees means seeds are less likely to emerge.
- It's too cold. Similarly, some seeds require plenty of warmth to germinate. Things like tomatoes, eggplant, and peppers do best if you use a heat mat. If you don't provide extra warmth, your seeds may take longer to germinate or not germinate at all.
- The soil is too wet. Seeds and <u>seedlings</u> need air to survive. If you drown your seeds in water, they may not be able to access oxygen, and they'll eventually rot. When starting seeds, you want your soil to be moist but not overly so.
- Damping-off. This is a fungal disease that commonly affects seeds and seedlings. Avoid it by using sterilized seed starting mix, disinfecting tools, and using quality seed. If you notice your seedlings continually succumbing to damping-off, it might be wise to throw out that seed packet.
- Seeds are getting eaten. In some areas, you may already be direct seeding outside. It's a great way to get a jump start on the season. Unfortunately, some animals, like birds and small mammals, don't really care that you're excited about the gardening season. If you plant seeds and wonder why they aren't germinating, it might be

- because critters are eating them when you're not around. You can use netting or other protective covers, like cloches, to keep your seeds away from hungry mouths.
- You've got duds. Sometimes, seeds, even from quality retailers, just aren't going to germinate. Most reputable seed companies have a germination percentage figure on their seed packets to let you know how many seeds are expected to germinate. The lower the percentage, the more likely you are to have a few non-starters. If you continually find yourself with duds on your hands, it's time to find a new seed supplier.
- Your seeds are too old. Seeds don't last forever. They'll last a shorter time if they're stored haphazardly. Some types of seeds also last longer than others. If your seeds aren't sprouting, check the date on the packet. I often buy packets of seed that contain way more seed than I know I'll be able to use. I like to share seeds with other gardening pals to make sure they don't go to waste.
- You're not being patient enough. Some seeds take a while to germinate. While lettuce seedlings usually pop up within less than a week, many herbs take a lot longer to sprout. Others can take months. Seeds will also take longer to germinate if the conditions aren't quite right.
- Your seeds need an extra helping hand. Some seed types require periods of freezing weather or soaking in water to sprout. Always carefully read the back of a seed packet to check if this needs to be done. Some flower seeds have hard coatings, so you need to go through these steps to weaken the coating.
- You've planted them too deep. This is more of an issue when direct sowing. Only plant as deep as

the length of the seed. So for small seeds like carrots, you want to make sure you're sowing them very shallowly.

## Which Indoor Plants Purify Air?



Let's get one thing straight. You probably won't improve your home's air quality by filling it with <u>indoor plants</u> that can purify the air. According to a <u>National Geographic</u> piece from

2019, houseplants won't do much to clean your home's air.

Most of the advice about air-purifying houseplants comes from an old NASA study. In a 2019 article in the Atlantic, Robinson Meyer reports that the study was indeed on the up and up, but it doesn't quite translate to the real world. Plants do have cleaning abilities, but they just can't handle cleaning an entire room, let alone a whole house of pollutants. Cleaning the air in your entire house would necessitate becoming a plant hoarder—which, come to think of it, isn't a terribly unappealing idea.

It's no surprise that this myth about indoor plants that can purify air has proliferated online. I believed it at one point! NASA did a study? It must be true! Unfortunately, that study results have taken on a life of their own. People love to talk about the air purifying qualities of plants.

But unless you're filling your home from floor to ceiling with plants—eliminating a clear path to walk—your pretty house plants aren't doing much to clean the air. You're better off investing in an air purifier if you're worried about air quality.

Houseplants still have a variety of benefits, though! They're attractive and are an inexpensive way to spruce up a room. They make great gifts, and research even shows that having houseplants can help boost your <u>mental health</u>.

#### A Brief Word About Air Quality

In-home air quality is a complicated thing. Gardeners love to spend time outdoors but did you know that keeping your windows open can contribute to poor indoor air quality? If there's a lot of traffic nearby or the air is particularly bad outside, letting it in will only serve to tank the air quality in your home.

Other things that can contribute to poor air quality include:

- Cooking
- Faulty appliances
- Fuel-burning appliances, like a gas stove or furnace
- New construction
- Household products like cleaning supplies and candles
- Mold

Don't let their lack of air-purifying abilities dissuade you from acquiring <a href="houseplants">houseplants</a>. They certainly won't make your air worse. Here's a video that goes through some of the easiest houseplants to take care of. Bonus: they're also some of the easiest to find for cheap!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vy3oE5xAivY

# How to Dye Flowers With Food Coloring



With the pandemic still limiting social outings, parents may be dreading the upcoming spring break. This fun little project is a great way to expend some creative energy during the March break or all through the summer. Dye <u>flowers</u> with food coloring and make a rainbow to display in a favorite vase.

Use storebought flowers or pick your own to keep the cost of this craft project low.

## Why dye flowers with food coloring?

Aren't flowers already colorful? Most flowers come in a variety of colors. Using <u>food coloring</u>, you can tint easy-to-find white flowers and create a vibrant DIY bouquet.

The project isn't just a fun one. It's also a great science experiment to demonstrate to kids how plants take up <u>water</u>.

Easy-to-source flower options:

- Carnations
- Daffodils

- Tulips
- Roses

Note that wood-stemmed flowers will take longer to change colors.

## How to dye flowers with food coloring

This project is ultra-simple, but it can be messy, especially if you're getting help from uncoordinated little ones.

Make sure to put down a tablecloth to sop up any accidental spills. Use one that you don't mind staining or grab a disposable one from the dollar store.

Here's create colorful flowers with food coloring at home:

- 1. Fill small cups with water, about halfway
- 2. Add different colors of food coloring to each water-filled cup.
- 3. Feel free to mix dyes!
- 4. Cut the ends of the flower stems
- 5. Place the flowers in the cups, with their stems in the water. Don't soak the petals.
- 6. Let the flowers soak
- 7. Petals will change colors over hours and days.

Here's a video showing the process:

#### Source:

https://www.sciencefun.org/kidszone/experiments/dyed-flowers/