

# PLANT *JOURNAL*

A guide to caring for  
your houseplants with  
Shayla Owodunni of  
The Plant Penthouse.

PHOTOS TRACY WALSH



Here are my must-have plants that will not only survive but thrive indoors. It is my hope that abundant joy, health and a helping of vibrant optimism will grow strong within your home.



## 1 Pothos & heartleaf philodendron

Two classics with two distinct personalities, pothos (*Epipremnum aureum*) and heartleaf (*Philodendron hederaceum*) are the must-haves of the plant parent starter pack. Each brings lush green foliage to your indoor jungle, regardless of your houseplant-growing skill level.

### HOW TO GROW

With heart-shaped leaves and trailing vines, both prefer bright, indirect light (four to six hours) but can handle the low light of Upper Midwest winters. Water when the top inch of soil dries; they'd rather be underwatered than overwatered.



## 2 ZZ plant

The nearly indestructible ZZ plant (*Zamioculcas zamiifolia*) is a favorite among black thumbs, new plant parents, homes with low or no light and banks and shopping malls across America.

### HOW TO GROW

Thriving on neglect, the ZZ plant tolerates low to bright indirect light and only needs watering every two to three weeks. Its thick rhizomes store water, making it drought tolerant.



## 3 Rubber plant

The rubber plant (*Ficus elastica*) is making a modern resurgence in a variety of colors, from deep burgundy to variegated creams and greens.

### HOW TO GROW

Rubber plants prefer bright, indirect light but can adapt to medium light. Keep soil evenly moist in the growing season and let it dry slightly in winter.



## 4 Bird of paradise

Pump up the drama and tropical vibes with the bird of paradise (*Strelitzia reginae* or *nicolai*). The perfect antidote to a drab, Upper Midwest winter.

### HOW TO GROW

This drama queen loves bright, direct light—the more sun, the better. Water regularly but let soil dry slightly between waterings.



## 5 Bromeliad

*Confession:* I own five of these beauties. Bold and bright, bromeliads light any room on fire all winter. Vibrant blooms in warm, tropical hues last up to six months and heat up any interior landscape.

### HOW TO GROW

Keep the central “cup” (the well at the base of the leaves) filled with water, but avoid soggy soil. Humidity is also a plus. Unsure about your moisture levels? Consider investing in a moisture meter and/or a humidity monitor, both staples in my winter toolkit.



6

## Monstera

A staple in any houseplant collection, *Monstera deliciosa* is a coveted winter roommate with its big split leaves and juicy, green foliage. Few plants command attention like a monstera.

### HOW TO GROW

Give it bright, indirect light and allow soil to dry slightly between waterings. It appreciates staking or a moss pole as it matures, helping it grow upward rather than outward. Whether sprawling or uniform, the choice is yours.



7

## Anthurium

With its telltale punchy red pancakes and glossy, green leaves, anthurium blooms all year long. Why stop at just one plant? I know I didn't (I own two).

### HOW TO GROW

Bright, indirect light keeps the blooms coming. Water when the top two inches of soil are dry and never let it sit in water. A little extra humidity goes a long way. Mayo Clinic reports the ideal relative home humidity for health is between 30 and 50 percent.



# PLANT CARE

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The following pages are designed to help you get to know your plants. Learn about them, experiment with ways to care for them and track their growth.

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Scientific name \_\_\_\_\_

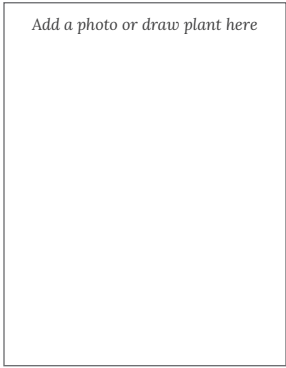
Special features & personality \_\_\_\_\_

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A member of the family since \_\_\_\_\_

Where is it from? \_\_\_\_\_

Toxic to  Humans  Pets  Allergies



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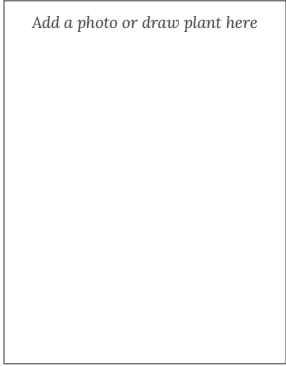
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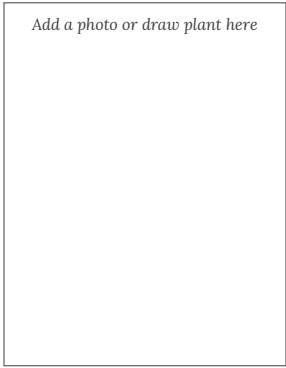
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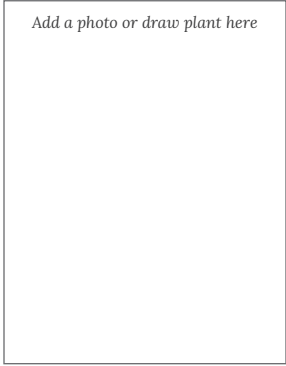
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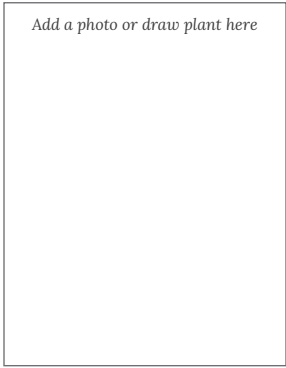
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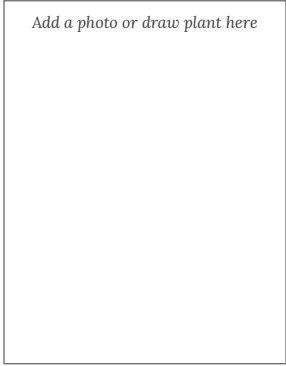
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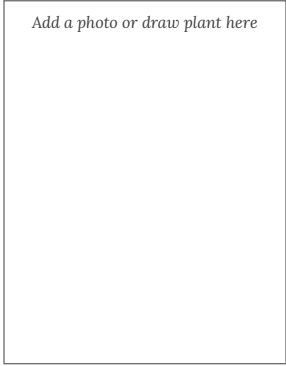
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Shayla Owodunni is a Hennepin County master gardener and founder of The Plant Penthouse, a Minneapolis-based botanical design studio and lifestyle brand.

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Tracy Walsh is a garden and portrait photographer whose work has appeared in *Fine Gardening* and *HGTV Magazine*.

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Northern  
**Gardener**  
BY THE MINNESOTA STATE HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY