

Choosing House Plants

Choose from the following sentences to fill the spaces in the text. There is one extra.

- A. Later, choice widens with experience; skillful amateurs can deal with almost any plant, no matter how delicate.
- B. This extra effort will be repaid many times over.
- C. Some plants do, however, prefer a dry atmosphere.
- D. Temperatures are mainly a winter problem.
- E. They can be moved around to alter the background completely.
- F. This is one reason that so many popular house plants are green, for this color blends so well with all other colors.

Choosing House Plants

In most ways, indoor gardening is preferable to outdoor. Rain, wind, storms and frost impede progress outside, whereas an indoor routine can be established without worrying about what is going on outside the window. Plants in pots are mobile, too. (1) More sun, less sun, higher or lower levels, a group instead of an orderly row, a mixed bowl or a dish garden-all provide fresh interest and the variety is endless. There should be no time to spend regretting the gardens of former times.

The ways in which plants can be displayed in various settings, such as offices, hospitals, store windows, conference rooms, commercial premises and hotels, are limitless, but in domestic surroundings the plants are part of the home and should share their position with the owners and with the furniture, whether period or contemporary, to make a harmonious whole. (2) If there are brightly colored curtains or upholstery, however, one should not forget to consider them when choosing a plant with colored flowers, leaves or berries.

The choice of plants is very wide, but for the beginner it is wiser to start with a few hardy plants, to gradually become used to their requirements, the diseases which may attack them, the amount of water they need at various times of the year and the feeding they may require. It is useless to choose plants for appearance only, for choice must depend primarily on the growing conditions required.

(3) Hardy plants have a certain tolerance for fluctuating temperatures and can overlook neglect in matters such as watering and feeding for short periods.

Some plants are able to thrive in shady conditions because the light that they get indoors approximates their natural habitat, the forests of Malaysia or tropical South America, areas from which the vast majority of house plants originate. It is not usually possible to give plants ideal growing conditions in a room primarily adjusted to the needs of personal living. Even well-lit rooms are shady in comparison with open conditions in gardens and, as light enters a room mainly through its windows, its intensity and duration depends on their exposure. (4) Especially

near windows, minimum temperature is crucial. It should be consistently maintained at not less than 50°F, although a number of plants can thrive in a temperature of 5° less. In apartments, in particular, a more difficult problem may be overheating and loss of humidity.

A dry atmosphere causes moisture loss from leaves, roots and soil. This must be offset by creating more humidity around the plants. One of the easiest ways to increase humidity is to put the plant pot into a larger container and to fill the extra space between outside container and inner pot with something absorbent, such as peat moss, which can be kept permanently moist. (5) Among them are Sansevieria, Pittosporum, Sedum, Grevillea and Aspidistra. Plants that appreciate a dry atmosphere usually like as much light as possible. All house plants should be removed before a room is painted, although most are unaffected by tobacco smoke.

B Towns and villages

1 Choose an adjective from the box to describe each of the places in 1–5.

bustling	depressing	prosperous	quaint	run-down
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1 This is a wealthy town, with many successful businesses and high-quality housing.

2 We loved the market, a lively place full of people, noise and activity.

3 This inner-city area has been neglected, and the buildings are in very poor condition.

4 It's an attractive village, unusual and rather old-fashioned. _____

5 The grey Victorian buildings have the same effect on me as the miserable weather.

2 Write the word from the box that can be used with each set of three words to form common collocations.

area	block	centre	estate	site	street
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0 town shopping leisure centre

1 office apartment tower _____

2 pedestrian shopping one-way _____

3 building caravan historic _____

4 residential conservation rural _____

5 industrial housing real _____

Correcting mistakes

Find the mistakes in the following sentences and correct them.

- 1 My father's been worked as a shop assistant for over 15 years.
- 2 I've been breaking my leg three times in the last few years.
- 3 Charlie Chaplin has been one of the greatest comic actors of the silent movies.
- 4 Do you realize how long time I've been waiting here for you?
- 5 This is the first time I see this film.
- 6 James and I have known each other since many years.
- 7 It's over two years since I play football.
- 8 I cleaned three rooms of the house so far today; I'll do the other two this afternoon.