

Bring the Outdoors in!

When our gardens hit the autumn and winter seasons, there's not always much colour and life to be seen unless you have a variety of evergreens and interesting planting. So why not look at the array of options for indoor plants and bring a little of the outdoors inside?

To be successful with houseplants you need to select according to the conditions of your home – taking temperature, light levels and draughts into account along with how regular you are with watering, feeding and deadheading of course.

There's a common cry from people that they 'kill' houseplants – usually with incorrect watering and positioning. Well, with just a little care, that needn't be the case.

There are many fabulous flowering houseplants that will give you pleasure for a good few months, if not more. Most of the common plants such as Kalanchoe Cyclamen, and African Violet are widely available and easy to care for. Other good indoor species include Hibiscus, some types of Geranium including the scented geranium, Peace Lily, Anthurium, Gloxinia, Gardenia and Begonia. Don't overlook the prickly but dramatic Cacti – there are specimens other than the well-known Christmas Cactus (which often flowers at Easter!) that provide indoor colour – what's more, they require very little care.

Orchids are an increasingly popular houseplant, giving a wonderful variety of flower shapes and colour as well as an architectural element with their arching stems. They also make ideal gifts as they are stylish and long-lasting.

The winter, and of course the Christmas period, is perfectly represented by the popular Poinsettia. Best known for its bright red bracts, it is also available in pink,

burgundy, cream and variegated varieties. The mini versions could be placed in a line down the centre of your winter dining table with tissue or crepe paper and ribbon to hide the plastic pots.

If you are after something more unusual and adventurous, you could try exotic Bougainvillea, Strelitzia or even some citrus such as Lemon or Calamondin. Speak to any of the team at the Plant Plot for advice on what conditions you will need to make the most of them.

How you display your plants also can be extremely effective. Striking coloured pots, groups of similar plants grouped together and colours that work well with your décor can look really interesting. As a foil for your flowering plants, add some interesting foliage plants such as Ficus, Yucca, Dracena or Maidenhair Fern.

So at a time when the best you can hope for outdoors is a tidy, 'sleeping' garden, you can brighten up your life indoors with a display that is easy to manage and looks great. Plants bring life and colour into your home.

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