

Dracaena Care Handbook

Architectural, low-light tolerant trees

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AGreenNest Plant Guide

Dracaena give a room architecture - canes topped with sword-like leaves that tolerate more shade than you would expect. This handbook covers the common Dracaena and how to avoid the tip-burn that plagues them.

What's Inside

- Dragon Tree
- Lucky Bamboo
- Mother-in-Law's Tongue
- General Care Principles
- Frequently Asked Questions

Dragon Tree - *Dracaena marginata*

Brown leaf edges mean fluoride or over-fertiliser -- flush the soil.

Care at a glance: light: low to bright indirect light; keep it out of hot, direct sun; water deeply every ~18 days (far less in winter); a standard peat-free houseplant mix; happiest around 55-85F; propagate by a stem cutting left to callus then rooted or a stem cutting; keep it away from cats and dogs.

Quick facts

- Light: low to bright indirect light; keep it out of hot, direct sun.
- Water: deeply every ~18 days, far less in winter.
- Temperature: 55-85F (13-29C).
- Humidity: average home humidity is fine.
- Soil: a standard peat-free houseplant mix.
- Propagate: a stem cutting left to callus then rooted or a stem cutting.
- Pet: keep away from cats and dogs.

It can live for decades and slowly become a small tree indoors.

Lucky Bamboo - *Dracaena sanderiana*

Usually grown in water with pebbles -- change the water monthly.

Care at a glance: light: low to bright indirect light; keep it out of hot, direct sun; water deeply every ~21 days (far less in winter); a standard peat-free houseplant mix; happiest around 60-85F; propagate by a stem cutting left to callus then rooted; keep it away from cats and dogs.

Quick facts

- Light: low to bright indirect light; keep it out of hot, direct sun.
- Water: deeply every ~21 days, far less in winter.
- Temperature: 60-85F (16-29C).
- Humidity: it likes a humid spot or a pebble tray.

- Soil: a standard peat-free houseplant mix.
- Propagate: a stem cutting left to callus then rooted.
- Pet: keep away from cats and dogs.

It is not bamboo at all, but a dracaena from Africa.

Mother-in-Law's Tongue - *Dracaena trifasciata*

Same plant as the snake plant under an older name -- care is identical.

Care at a glance: light: almost no natural light -- a north window or dim corner is fine; water deeply every ~21 days (far less in winter); a gritty, free-draining succulent mix; happiest around 55-90F; propagate by splitting the clump at repotting; keep it away from cats and dogs.

Quick facts

- Light: almost no natural light -- a north window or dim corner is fine.
- Water: deeply every ~21 days, far less in winter.
- Temperature: 55-90F (13-32C).
- Humidity: dry air is fine.
- Soil: a gritty, free-draining succulent mix.
- Propagate: splitting the clump at repotting.
- Pet: keep away from cats and dogs.

Architects loved it in the 1970s for its upright sculptural look.

General Care Principles

No matter the species in this handbook, a handful of principles carry most of the weight. Get these right and the individual notes above become fine-tuning.

Match the plant to the light: sun-lovers go in the brightest window or under a grow light; shade-lovers go in east or north light. Wrong light is the single most common cause of failure.

Water on the plant's schedule, not the calendar. Soak thoroughly, then let the soil dry before the next drink. In winter, ease right off - most of these plants want a cool, dry rest.

Use the right soil and a draining pot. Free-draining for succulents, moisture-retentive but aerated for ferns and foliage. A drainage hole is non-negotiable.

Propagate to multiply. Almost every plant here can be cloned from a leaf, offset, division, or cutting - see each species for its best method.

Frequently Asked Questions

How often should I really water?

Forget frequent sips. Soak the soil completely, then let it dry out fully before the next drink. In winter most of these plants want a long, dry rest. The lift test (light pot = dry) beats any calendar.

My plant is stretching and pale - what does that mean?

It wants more light. Move it to a brighter window or add a full-spectrum LED grow light. New growth will be compact and colourful; the stretched part will not undo itself, so behead and re-root the top if you like.

What soil should I use?

A free-draining mix is non-negotiable. For succulents that means gritty, sandy soil in a pot with a

real drainage hole. For leafy types a peat-free houseplant mix is fine. Sitting in wet soil is the fastest route to rot.

Is this plant safe around my pets?

We note pet safety per species in this guide. 'Pet-safe' means it is not on the usual toxic lists, but no plant is food - keep curious cats and dogs from chewing leaves, and call a vet if you are worried.

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