

Snake Plant, ZZ & Cast-Iron Care Handbook

The nearly indestructible houseplants

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AGreenNest Plant Guide

If a plant can survive a forgotten corner and a frequent traveller, it is probably in this group. Snake Plant, ZZ, and Cast-Iron are the gold standard for 'I kill everything' gardeners. This handbook covers their near-bombproof care.

What's Inside

- Cast-Iron Plant
- Snake Plant
- ZZ Plant
- General Care Principles
- Frequently Asked Questions

Cast-Iron Plant - *Aspidistra elatior*

Tolerates gloom, dry air, and indifference better than any other plant.

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 standard peat-free houseplant mix; happiest around 45-85F; propagate by splitting the clump at repotting; pet-safe.

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: 45-85F (7-29C).
- Humidity: average home humidity is fine.
- Soil: a standard peat-free houseplant mix.
- Propagate: splitting the clump at repotting.
- Pet: generally safe around pets.

Victorians called it cast-iron because it survived smoky, dark parlours.

Snake Plant - *Sansevieria trifasciata*

The most forgiving houseplant; almost impossible to kill with neglect.

Care at a glance: light: almost no natural light -- a north window or dim corner is fine; water deeply every ~30 days (far less in winter); a gritty, free-draining succulent mix; happiest around 55-90F; propagate by splitting the clump at repotting or a single leaf laid on dry soil; 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 ~30 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 or a single leaf laid on dry soil.
- Pet: keep away from cats and dogs.

It is one of the few plants that respire (releases oxygen) at night.

ZZ Plant - *Zamioculcas zamiifolia*

Rhizomes store water, so a missed month of watering is fine.

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It grows new shoots straight from thick potato-like rhizomes.

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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