NAGPUR GARDEN CLUB, NAGPUR

INDOOR PLANTS (Potted Plants)

There is an almost limitless choice of plants for Indoor use. There are no rules for the kinds of plants that can be used to decorate a home. The selection is largely a matter of personal taste, but certain guide lines can prove useful. House plants belong to many families. These plants often have decorative foliage rather than attractive flowers.

First of all, it is obviously sensible to select plants that suit normal home conditions rather than try to make either the plants or the home satisfy difficult requirements. To a certain degree, every indoor plant needs daily attention. As a first step, then, assess your home environments, and choose plant to suit it. Scale and proportion also play an important role.

CARING FOR INDOOR PLANTS

All plants live and grow in basically the same way. Their essential needs are air, light, water, mineral food materials, and a suitable range of temperatures.

Proper Care:

1) **Light:** Light is one vital factor in plant growth that the indoor gardener can control by intelligent planning. Begin by understanding fully the extent and limitation of the amounts of light provided by window and wall arrangements in areas where plants are to be positioned. Acquire plants that will not only look decorative but that will grow well in the light that can be provided for them. If this is done, there should be no problems. On average a plants require 12-ifi hours of light a day in order to maintain active growth.

2) **Temperature:** Every plant grows best within a preferred range of temperatures. Most plants can also tolerate temperatures some what above and below the preferred levels, but they will die if exposed for very long to temperatures outside the tolerance range. The most satisfactory, indoor -plants, therefore, are those with a preferred temperature range of about 18° - 23 C.

3) **Humidity:-** Humidity is a vital factor for plant's well being. However humidity, which is less easy to either to gauge or to provide. Humidity is the 'relative amount of water vapour contained in, the air, it has nothing to do with the moistness of the patting mixtures. Probably the best and

easiest solution to provide a fairly consent level of water, by spraying a fine mist of water around the plants at least twice a day preferably in the morning and evening.

4) **Watering:-** One of the common reasons for the death of plants is improper watering, inadequate or over watering. Watering will depend on the growth of plants, size of plant, size of pot, light, temperature and humidity of the atmosphere. Checking the top soil of the pot will give a definite idea of the moisture in the Soil.

5) **Soil:-** A good soil mixture should have two parts of soil and one part of organic manure. A little sand makes the soil porous. Addition of wood ashes bone meal or suphala at the rate of 1 table spoon to a pat once a year at the time of potting.

6) **Feeding:-**Every plant needs various nutrients in order to growth satisfactorily. The plants will need extra feeding when they become pot bound. Now the plants can be removed to another bigger pot or they are given a teaspoonful of complete fertilizer as sterameal, Rallis meal etc. Once in every 2 to 3 months. In case chemical elements are essential for balanced growth of all plants Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Potassium. Nitrogen is vital for the growth of stems and leaves and for the production of energy making chlorophyll. Phosphorus promotes healthy root production. Potassium is necessary for the production of flowers and fruit as well as general sturdiness.

7) **Potting and repotting:** The pot must be chosen in regard to the size of the plant. Repotting of the plants can be done once in a year. The plants may be put into bigger pots or the soil around the roots is broken, the roots trimmed and the plant put back in to the pot with new soil.

8) **Top dressing:-**To top- dress a plant, scrape away the tap couple of centimeters of potting mixtures with a small trowel or an old spoon. Remove as much of the mixture as possible without exposing major roots. Then refill the pot with fresh mixture up to the original level. Use the standard potting mixture and add one part of dry, rotted cow dung manure to every two of the mixture.

9) **Pruning and Training:-** The tips of the plant are piched to encourage side growth. Indoor plants can sometimes become too big or unbalanced in growth. Pruning can either prevent or remedy such conditions. Pruning is necessary for the shape and growth of plants. Climbing plants are trained along sticks and pruned once a year.

10) **Cleaning Plants:-** The foliage of plants is cleaned with sponge and water, spraying or mist praying the foliage is also useful as this helps to remove the dust from the leaves and helps for better aeration.

11) **Plant Health:-** House plants are protected against disease like fungus and bacteria with appropriate spraying, They are also protected from insects by spraying with necessary chemical and insecticide sprays.

12) **Propagation:** House plants can be propagated by stem cuttings, leaf cutting, division and air layering.

Choosing House Plants: Will depend on the likes and dislikes of the owner, space available, climatic factors and other facilities available in the house.

There are many species and varieties of house plants available. As it is not possible to detail all the plants, a select list is given below keeping in mind the local conditions that prevail in this reason.

1. **Acalypha:** are showy house plants, significant for their attractive foliage. All are fast growing and develop quickly in to sizeable shrubs. Grown in partial shade and requires plenty of water, propagated by tip cutting or stem cutting.

2. **Asparagus:** A sprangeri and needle like leaves on long, trailing, and thorny branches or stems - rich soil with plenty of water.

3. **Begonia:** Begonias range is size from tiny, ground hugging creepers to stout-stemmed specimen 2 - 3 m tall. They do not require continues direct sun light adequate water, propagated from cuttings.

4. **Bryphyllum:** They produce small plant lets on the edge of their leaves, often when the parents themselves are only a few weeks old. These plants let drop of and root wherever they fall.

5. **Caladiums:**(Elephants Ears) They have long stalked, arrow headed. Leaves, which are richly coloured with green, pink, rose, add silver, tall shade and plenty of moistures, Propagated from bulbs.

6. **Chlorophytum:** (Spider plant)There are many chlorophytum species but only spider plant is a popular indoor plant. Plenty of moisture and liquid manure-grown from young plant lets at the end of long trailing stems.

7. **Dracaena:** They are highly regarded for their striking, usually variegated leaves. Grows in shade, moisture, soil, propagated by them cutting.

8. **Dieffenbachia:** Tall plant with thick stems and lance shaped leaves which are broad and dark green or light green shads, mild light, moderate Water, propagated by stem cutting.

It is needless to say that with love for plants, hard work and experience gained, one can learn not only to grow some of the above plants.