



## GUIDE TO GROWING HOUSEPLANTS



*'House plants' are not house plants everywhere in the world. Somewhere in the world, what we grow indoors is growing happily outdoors. Most plants that we grow indoors in Ireland are from tropical places with fairly stable temperatures. Within our homes, we can create different conditions to care for different types of plants.*

**When you are caring for a houseplant, there are a few things that you need to keep in mind: temperature, light, humidity and water, as well as any ongoing trimming or shaping.**



### Temperature

Most houseplants dislike very hot places, so avoid keeping them too near radiators, fires or cooking surfaces. They enjoy the type of temperatures that we enjoy, eg approx. 14° to 24°C. Just like us, they dislike cold draughts, so avoid windy halls or leaky windows in winter. A slight downward temperature change at night time promotes better flowering.

### Light

All plants require a degree of natural light. Some houseplants, such as cacti and succulents, require as much light as can be found in Irish homes – including direct sunlight. These should be placed in sunny windows. Other plants, such as orchids and ferns, require light, but not direct sunlight. These plants can be placed further into the room. Some plants, such as Spider plants, Bromeliads and Sanseveria can survive very low light levels, such as bathrooms with small windows.

### Humidity

Many houses can be very dry, especially when heating is on over the winter. Misting the plants occasionally with water keeps the leaves clean and the foliage fresh.

### Water

As a general rule, plants require at least twice as much water in the summer as in the winter. In winter, allow the compost to get dry between watering. Empty any excess water from the saucer or pot after watering to prevent soggy compost. In the warmer months, increase watering and allow compost to be moister, but still remove excess water.

### Feeding

Use a liquid fertiliser during the warmer summer months, added to the water every 2-3 weeks. Some plants such as orchids, citrus and cactus have specific fertilisers.