



UNIT 6: INDOOR PLANTS

In hotel properties, indoor plants are appreciated for their ability to add charm and liveliness to the hotel guestrooms and public areas such as lobbies and corridors. Many indoor plants are known to absorb potentially harmful gases and act as air cleaning machines. They also help us to appreciate the natural beauty.

SELECTION OF INDOOR PLANT:

- Complimenting décor and a part of interior decoration.
- Appropriate size / shape depending on the area they are being kept in. For example, it would be a mistake to have a plant that climbs to a great height in low ceiling room, or a very large, bushy plant in small or narrow room.
- Easy to care – The plant should not be the one requiring frequent pruning, watering etc as it may not be possible to do so often in public areas.
- Placement fulfilling light, air requirements of plant – Plant should be capable of surviving indoor conditions related to light, temperature and humidity requirements. A plant requiring more light can be placed near windows from which sunlight filters in for some hours each day.
- Suitable containers – Clay pots are preferred. They can be concealed in decorative pots of brass, wood, ceramic etc
- Non-messy – The plant should not be shedding too many leaves, pollen etc. Being indoors these may be messy and harmful.

POPULAR INDOOR PLANTS

- Ornamental Foliage Plants – Asparagus, Begonia, Cyprus, India rubber plant, Peace Lily
- Cacti and Succulents – Aloe, Snake plant, Agave
- Herbaceous plants – Thyme, Basil, Sage
- Ferns & Palms – Areca palm, Pygmy date palm, Boston fern
- Flowering Plants – Anthurium, Begonia, Fuschia, Orchids
- Climbers – English Ivy, Money plant, Philodendron

CARE OF INDOOR PLANTS

Most indoor plants require regular attention

- Air temperature
- Watering
- Humidity
- Re-potting
- Cleaning
- Feeding / Fertilizing
- Pruning
- Pest control
- Light requirement



- a) Air temperature
 - Adapt in given temperature
 - Thrive in warm temperature
 - Avoid constant change in temperature
 - 70°F-80°F during day and 65°F to 70°F during night.
- b) Watering
 - Under watering (causing wilting) & overwatering (drainage of nutrients of soil and rotten roots) both are dangerous
 - Depends on various factors (season, age/type of plant, temperature, size of pot etc)
 - Less water in winters, for thick leaves & freshly potted plants
 - Use water that is neither too chilled nor too warm – preferably rainwater – and pour it into the soil.
- c) Humidity
 - Browning & wilting of tips in AC rooms
 - Plants loose water from porous leaves
 - Place plants on wet pebbles
 - Group the plants together
 - Spray some water on leaves
- d) Potting and re-potting
 - Use a light mix of soil for potting plants – a good mixture is made of equal quantities of leaf mould and a peaty soil containing plenty of fibres with half quantity of sharp sand.
 - If the roots forms a close network within the soil container and begin to come out of the pot, the plant probably needs re-potting in larger container.
- e) Cleaning
 - Regular cleaning reduces the risk of attack by insects.
 - Spray or sponge the leaves with water and dry them afterwards.
- f) Feeding/ fertilizing
 - Proper balance of NPK
 - Nitrogen for stems & leaves
 - Phosphorous for roots
 - Potassium for general sturdiness
 - Available ready made
 - Frequency varies
 - Choose a balanced fertilizer for foliage plants, such as 20-20-20, and one that is higher in phosphorous for flowering plants, such as 15-30-15. These numbers represents the percents by weight of nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium in the fertilizer.



g) Pruning

- Trimming of plants for variety of reasons
- Grow bushier & desired shape
- Get rid of diseased plants
- To control growing stages

h) Pest control

Some insects are so small that their presence is not noticed until the plant shows signs of ill health. Suspicious symptoms are:

- Mottling or yellowing of leaves
- A fine white network like cobwebs
- Mildew which produces a whitish powder on the leaves

Avoid insecticide treatment on sunny day. Avoid insecticide on delicate leaves. Use protective gear. An occasional light spraying of eco friendly pesticides will keep plants safe from pests.

i) Light requirements

- Natural light for proper growth – careful placement
- Dark green leaves can grow in sufficient artificial light
- Rotation of placement if possible near natural light.
- Light provides the energy source needed for plants to manufacture food. The amount of light is commonly measured in foot-candles (ft-c). The interior of a well-lighted home is often less than 100 ft-c, while outdoor light intensity on a clear sunny day may exceed 10,000 ft-c. Plants differ greatly in their light intensity requirements.

Indoor Plant Containers

Many types of containers can be used for growing plants. Most pots with bottom drainage holes are made of plastic, ceramic or clay, whereas decorative containers without drainage holes may be made of clay, ceramic, plastic, wood, copper, brass and various other materials.

It is important to choose the correct size container for the plant. Containers too small or too large present an unbalanced appearance. An appropriate container should provide room for soil and roots, allow sufficient headroom for proper watering, and be attractive without competing with the plant.

Two methods for potting indoor plants are:

- 1) Planting directly in the container – when plants are potted directly in the container, the container should have a drainage hole and a tray to catch the excess water. If the pot does not have a drainage hole, place a layer of coarse gravel in the bottom to allow a space for excess water (it is important not to saturate soil in such containers).
- 2) Placing a potted plant in another, more decorative container ("double-potting"). The "double-potting" technique can be used with decorative containers with or without drainage holes. The smaller, interior pot should have a drainage hole. If the decorative pot does not have a drainage hole, place a layer of gravel in this pot, and place the potted plant on the gravel layer. No gravel layer is necessary if the decorative pot has a



drainage hole. Be sure to place a tray beneath the pot to catch the excess water. Never place pots directly in contact with the carpet, floor or furniture as moisture can damage its surroundings.

BONSAI

- Miniature version of full sized tree
- Japanese technique
- Meaning “Growing plants in container”
- Ornamental plants
- Care same as other normal indoor plants



TERRARIUM & BOTTLE GARDENS

- A sealable glass container containing soil and plants, and can be opened for maintenance to access the plants inside. However, may be open to the atmosphere rather than being sealed.
- Often kept as decorative or ornamental items.
- Closed terrarium create a unique environment for plant growth, as the transparent walls allow for both heat and light to enter the terrarium.
- The sealed container combined with the heat entering the terrarium allows for the creation of a small scale water cycle.



Both Bonsai or terrariums should be cleaned and fulfill all the plant's requirements of nutrients from soil, water, sunlight etc. They require maintenance just like indoor plants.

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