

Plant care 101: Channeling your inner plant parent

RACHEL RUDD

NEWS EDITOR

I get it, it's January. Not exactly what you'd think of as "prime plant buying time." Not to worry however, because I am here to prove you wrong and explain how to take care of the new plants you will buy this January.

First, I need to talk about the benefits of plants to explain why you should buy them. First off, they'll add a nice pop of green to your dorm or apartment. As someone who has crowded her dorm and house full of plants, I can say they add such lovely greenery to living spaces.

They also are great for your mental health. There is nothing more soothing than just taking 15 minutes to water and trim my plants, or getting your hands dirty as you repot a plant.

Basically, what I'm saying is, you should get them. So let's assume you're at the store (I personally recommend the garden sections of Home Depot or Lowes because they have a better selection). What plants should you get?

PLANTS TO GET

For beginners, I recommend haworthias (also called zebra plants). They're incredibly tough, do great in low light environments and can go for long periods without water. I've dropped mine on the floor before and it's still trucking.

I also can't recommend jade plants enough. My plant addiction started with a tiny jade plant and it's survived two college moves and numerous repottings.

They also do well with infrequent waterings, so they're great for busy college kids.

A final plant for your collection would have to be a Ming thing cactus. They're weird lumpy little plants and like any cacti, they can go for long periods of time without water. They're tough little plants too, as like my jade plant, it has survived two college move-ins.

Other good plants for beginners include aloe veras, snakeplants and Christmas cacti (don't worry about the name, you can buy them whenever).

OTHER SUPPLIES

So, you've grabbed your new succulent friend, but don't leave the store just yet. You're going to want some good dirt and a good pot for your plant. The key to succulents is drainage, so make sure you buy soil that allows easy water flow. There is soil specially made for cacti/succulents, which is a great start and what I use.

However, if you're feeling fancy, you can use this three part ratio when filling your pot: two parts sand, two parts gardening soil and 1 part pumice.

For the pot, it might be tempting to buy that cute llama-shaped pot, but I'm going to recommend you steer clear of that in favor of a traditional terracotta pot. They're cheap and due to their porous nature, allow for excess moisture to evaporate. This is necessary for succulents, so terracotta with a saucer for collecting excess water will be paramount to your plant's success.

When buying a pot, make sure you don't buy too big of

a pot, otherwise you might risk overwatering. When in doubt, get a pot that is at least one inch bigger than the diameter of the root ball.

REPOTTING

When you take your plant home to repot, make sure to put a good amount of dirt into your new pot. Then, remove your plant from the plastic pot you bought it in and break up the root ball. It will likely be very dry, so don't be afraid to wet the root ball to make breaking it up easier. Unless you rip the roots, you won't hurt the plant by doing this.

Place your plant in the pot and fill in the rest of the pot. Make sure your plant is nice and stable after you've filled in all the dirt.

You might be tempted to water your plant, but don't just yet. Repotting is stressful for a plant, so give it a week or so to get settled before watering.

WATERING

When it comes to watering succulents, people often think these plants never need water because they're desert plants. This could not be farther from the truth. When watering them, make sure you give them enough water that it collects in the saucer. Be sure to dump out this excess water to ensure that the bottom soil gets dry, as keeping your soil dry prevents root rot.

Succulents tend to go dormant in the winter months (think mid to the end of October) and become active again around the beginning of April. When they are dormant, they only need to be



PHOTO COURTESY OF SEASIDE SUCCULENTS

watered around once a month. When they're active, I water them about every two weeks.

The trick with watering however, is paying attention to your plant. If it looks like it needs water (it looks wrinkly, shrunken or disheveled), it probably needs water. Learning to get to know your plant and knowing when it needs water will help tremendously.

On the other hand, signs of an overwatered plant include it looking yellow, mushy or translucent. If your plant looks this way, don't water it. Leave it alone and let it dry out.

FINAL THOUGHTS

One final thing when taking care of your new plant: sunlight. Generally, placing a plant in a well-lit window will be just fine, but there should be a tag or label on your plant



PHOTO COURTESY OF GARDEN GOOD DIRECT

Some of Rachel Rudd's own plants in her dorm.

that tells you approximately how many hours of sunlight it needs. Pay attention to this tag and you should be just fine. And that's it. Go and take care of those plants!

POP PICK

PHOTO COURTESY OF YOUTUBE

"FLOWERS" BY MILEY CYRUS

REBECCA ROBINSON | EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Miley Cyrus has been a constant in my life since I was a child. She was at my first concert when I was 6, she was the main character in the video game I played on my first flight (technically it was Miley Stewart) and her songs played at my first school dance. For many in Gen Z she has soundtracked our lives.

Now as an adult who still loves her I was thrilled to see her release new music this year. "Flowers" is the self love anthem that everyone should be listening to in the new year. This song is beyond catchy and is guaranteed to stick in your head.

The chorus in "Flowers" foils the song "When I Was Your Man" by Bruno Mars. Bruno Mars' song lyrics are "I should have bought you flowers and held your hand / Should have given you all my hours when I had the chance / Take you to every party 'cause all you wanted to do was dance." While Miley Cyrus' song lyrics are "I can buy myself flowers, write my name in the sand / Talk to myself for hours, say things you don't understand / I can take myself, dancing and I can hold my own hand."

"Flowers" is the lead track and the lead single for her upcoming eighth album titled Endless Summer Vacation, which she said is her "love letter to L.A." The album is set to be released on March 10, 2023. I think we have a lot to look forward to on this new album.

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Contact Rebecca Robinson, Editor-in-Chief
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STUDENT SPEAK

What are your New Years resolutions?



Cidney says:

“Focus on peace and my mental health.”

Cidney Davis is a sophomore creative media production major from North Little Rock, AR.



Van says:

“I don’t have one.”

Van Tran is a sophomore civil engineering major from Vietnam.



AnnElise says:

“To be more productive.”

AnnElise Jarrett is a junior graphic design major from Jonesboro, AR.



Christopher says:

“To stop drinking soda.”

Christopher Burkhart is a junior social work major from Mountain Home, AR.



Derek says:

“Planning to have everything go great.”

Derek Asamoah is a graduate student engineering management major from Ghana.

This Weeks Puzzles

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
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Hint: A famous actor.

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