

# Home Grounds Fact Sheet

## Low-light Foliage Plants

A low light exposure encompasses 80-90% of the area of an average room in the home. Ten feet or more away from a window is considered low light. Areas where the light is generally poor include dull hallways, foyers, stairwells, basement playrooms with small windows, dark surfaced walls, windows with heavy draperies, book shelves, desk tops, lobby and reception areas.

### Cast Iron Plant

#### *Aspidistra elatior*

Traditional foliage plant with long, heavy, glossy leaves that grows where nothing else will, even under the worst conditions. Needs little light and is not particular about temperature. Thrives with infrequent watering. Don't totally neglect or overwater. Repot only when extremely potbound in the spring. Also a variegated form.



**Propagation** by division of roots in spring.

**Problems:** Mealy bugs, mites, scales.

### Chinese Evergreen

#### *Aglaonema* sp.



Several fine species comprise this group, all of which make excellent low-light houseplants. They can be grown directly in water without soil. Used as a table plant or in floor planters, the Chinese evergreen thrives in

the home, shopping center or office. Many fine varieties with interesting color patterns are available in garden centers and florists. Keep the temperature warm, not below 60°F at night. Repot only when potbound. *Aglaonemas* prefer a rich, loamy soil. Allow soil surface to dry before rewatering.

**Propagation** by cane layering, terminal and sectional cuttings and air layering.

**Problems:** Mealy bugs or scale.

### Grape Ivy

#### *Cissus rhombifolia*

Popularly grown as a hanging basket or table plant, this tropical vine has glossy green leaves with pointed leaflets and tendrils. New growth is covered with a thin, white felt. Keep the soil slightly damp, but not soggy. Enjoys high humidity.



**Propagation** by cuttings.

**Problems:** Spider mites, scale, mealy bugs.

### Pothos, Devil's Ivy

#### *Epipremnum (Scindapsus) aureum*



One of the most popular of hanging foliage plants. Keep the temperature warm. Let the soil dry out slightly between waterings. Plants can be trained upright onto fiber poles or used in hanging baskets.

**Propagation** by leaf-bud cuttings, stem cuttings.

**Problems:** Mealy bugs.

### Mosaic or Nerve Plant *Fittonia* sp.

A ground cover type plant that tolerates low light. *F. verschaffeltii agryoneura* has light green leaves with white veins and midrib. *F. verschaffeltii* has pink veination and thicker leaves. Ideal for use in a terrarium, hanging basket or as a table plant. Keep soil slightly moist but not soggy. Prefers warm temperatures. Requires additional humidity for best appearance.

**Propagation** by terminal, leaf or leaf section cuttings.

**Problems:** Scales, mealy bugs and slugs.

**Palms - Most species tolerant of low light (see leaflet A-1-23).**

## English Ivy *Hedera helix*

A wide variety of English ivies are available at garden centers and florists. Leaf shape, color, form and size allow for interesting uses: pot plant culture, wall coverings, wreaths or topiary. Will acclimate to low light conditions. Keep soil barely moist, not soggy. Remove dust from leaves by syringing in sink as needed. Repot using a general potting mix. Tolerates low temperatures (45-55°F).

**Propagation** by cuttings.

**Problems:** Mites. Chemical pesticides are available. If you choose to use a chemical pesticide, contact your local Cooperative Extension office for specific recommendations.

## Split Leaf Philodendron or Swiss Cheese Plant *Monstera deliciosa*

This climbing plant has large, leathery, perforated leaves. If grown on a pole, the plant will grow even larger. Can readily be cut back to keep in bounds. Keep soil damp but not soggy. Prefers temperature above 60°F. Prefers humidity. Remove dust from the leaves by syringing weekly. New leaves formed may not be as deeply lobed or perforated when plant is grown in low light.



**Propagation** by cuttings, air layering.

**Problems** - No insect problems of major concern.

## Philodendron (see leaflet A-1-11)



### Screw Pine

*Pandanus Veitchii*

This shrub is native to the South Pacific. Its white-striped, swordlike leaves with spiny margins are arranged in a spiral. It can be easily conditioned to thrive under low light. Repot only when pot-bound. Minimum temperature of 60°F. Let the soil dry out between waterings. Fertilize during the growing season. Prefers humidity.

**Propagation** by suckers that grow from the base of the plant.

**Problems:** Mealy bugs.

## Snake Plant *Sansevieria* sp.

African plant with thick, upright leaves striped or banded with yellow or light green. When old, pot-bound and grown in greater light, spikes of yellow or white flowers sometimes grow in August. Use a soil mix of equal parts sterile soil, sand or vermiculite and peat moss. Fertilize only about every 3-4 months. The snake plant can tolerate dim lighting but can also be grown in higher light areas. It is a tough plant and easy to grow. Water only when soil is dry to the touch, then water thoroughly. Tolerant of all conditions except drafts.



**Propagation** by 4" long leaf section cuttings.

## Peace Lily *Spathiphyllum* sp.

Many varieties found in garden centers or florists. Several of the more popular include *S. "Mauna Loa"* with large leaves and flowers, and *S. clevelandii* with smaller leaves and flowers. A newcomer, "mini" *Spathiphyllum*, is a compact plant with whitish stripes and small green leaves and white flowers. The Peace Lily has deep green, glossy leaves with long-lasting, spathe-like creamy white flowers. It thrives in low light, although it will flower more profusely in medium light. Keep soil slightly moist at all times. Do not allow temperatures to drop below 55-60°F. Fertilize bi-monthly during the growing season.



**Propagation** by division. Enjoys being pot-bound; do not repot too frequently.

**Problems:** Mealy bugs.

## Zebra Haworthia *Haworthia fasciata*

A succulent with white spotted thick leaves that form rosettes. Tubelike flowers hang on long stalks. Will acclimate to low light conditions. Ideal for dish gardens. Water thoroughly, then let the soil dry out. Give cool night temperatures (55°F.) Repot only when needed, using a well-drained porous mixture.

**Propagation** by seeds, offsets or cuttings.

**Problems:** No insect problems of major concern.