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How to Care for Peperomia Plants



Give **Peperomia Caperata Lilian** good sunlight.

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FREE GUIDE!

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Growing and Propagating Peperomia Indoors

By [Lauren Landers](#)

Last Updated: March 13, 2025



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Whether peppered throughout houseplant collections or growing solo in a pot or hanging basket, peperomia plants spice up indoor spaces with their bright colors and uniquely shaped leaves. This whimsical group of plants is distantly related to black pepper plants (think peppercorns!), including the ever-popular watermelon peperomia, string of turtles, and more. If you want to *turn up the heat* in your houseplant collection with a new plant or two, this guide will teach you the basics of how to plant, grow, and propagate any peperomia you want!

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About Peperomia Plants

mia are commonly sold as houseplants. They have thick, succulent-like leaves that can be smooth, patterned, ruffled, or variegated; they also range in shape from heart-shaped to oval or pointy. Choose from eye-catching colors from gorgeous greens to striking shades of purple, red, or gray!



Peperomia graveolens, or Ruby Glow, has pretty red undersides that give it a glowing appearance! Credit: Nahhana

Peperomia plants grow wild in many tropical and subtropical regions around the globe. However, most peperomia come from the warm and humid clouds or rainforests of Central and South America. In the wild, peperomias typically grow in the dappled light along forest floors; however, some varieties grow as epiphytes or lithophytes and cling to trees or rocks with

As houseplants, peperomia may be upright or trailing. They are at their best in bright, indirect light and love humidity. But while many tropical houseplants are finicky about dry air, peperomia can tolerate lower humidity levels and dry soil, too. This is mainly because peperomias have semi-succulent leaves and stems, which these plants use to store water and resist drought.

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Although peperomias are mostly grown as foliage plants, they occasionally bloom in spring or summer and produce inconspicuous flower spikes that are slender, long,

make ideal tabletop or hanging plants for small spaces and apartments. Best of all, peperomias are non-toxic to pets and grow well in terrariums!

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- [How to Care for Dieffenbachia Plants](#)
- [How to Care for String of Pearls Plant](#)

PLANTING

Compared to plants like pothos and rubber trees, peperomias grow slowly, and their shallow roots prefer to be a bit pot-bound. As a result, these plants don't need to be repotted often, and they're perfectly happy in small terracotta or other well-draining pots. However, you should repot these plants if their soil begins to break down or if their roots emerge from the drainage holes of their pots!



“String of turtles” (*Peperomia Prostrata*) is a trailing houseplant with dainty patterned leaves. Credit: Maritxu

- Although peperomia can be repotted in any season, they bounce back quicker if you repot them in spring or summer.
- To start, remove the plant from its old pot by grasping the base of the plant with one hand and gently twisting the pot away with your other hand. Peperomia stems and leaves break easily, so be sure to handle them with care!
- Choose a new container that's just 1 or 2 sizes bigger than your existing pot and add several inches of a well-draining potting mix into the bottom of the pot. Standard potting mixes are suitable for peperomia, or you can grow these plants in a potting mix blended with perlite or orchid bark.
- Locate the peperomia in its new pot so the plant is at the same height it was growing in its old container and fill in the empty space around the plant's

and return your plant to its original growing location!

GROWING



Peperomia caperata rosso is another stunning pep! The underside of its leaves is deep red, as are its stems.

Credit: CoinUp

Although peperomia come in different shapes, sizes, and colors, these plants all have the same basic care needs, and aren't fussy about it. You can expect peperomia to live about 5 to 10 years, but peperomia plants can last even longer if you propagate their stems into new plants.

Light

Peperomia prefer dappled light, while direct sun can scorch their leaves. To keep

place them several feet away from brighter south-facing windows. If your plants start to get leggy, give them more light, and remember to rotate your pots regularly to keep plant stems from leaning toward the light!

Water

Thanks to their semi-succulent leaves, peperomia plants don't need much water, and they should only be watered when the top few inches of soil feel dry. If in doubt, it's always best to underwater peperomias. These plants have sensitive roots that quickly succumb to root rot in soggy soil.

Fertilizer

If you plant peperomias in rich potting soil, you may not need to fertilize them at all. However, if your plants need a pick-me-up, you can apply a monthly dose of liquid, organic fertilizer diluted to half strength in spring and summer.

Peperomia usually tolerate indoor temperatures and humidity levels well, but they grow best when humidity is between 40 and 60%. Adding a humidifier or a pebble tray beneath your plant's pot can boost humidity and keep leaves from drying out. These plants are also suitable for terrariums or steamy bathrooms that receive plenty of light!

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Peperomia obtusifolia. Baby Rubber

Seasonal Care

Peperomias need more water in summer and less in winter, and fertilizer should only be applied when the plants actively grow in spring and summer. Some plant parents may choose to move peperomias outdoors in summer, but outdoor plants should be positioned in shady spots and brought back inside before temperatures dip below 50°F. Keeping these plants away from drafty windows, A/C units, and space heaters is also wise.

Throughout the year, peperomias can be pruned by pinching leggy growth, damaged leaves, and sparse stems back to a leaf node as needed. If desired, peperomia flowers can also be removed to redirect the plant's energy towards leafy growth.

Propagation

Peperomias can be propagated via root division or seeds, but stem propagation is the easiest way to create more free plants

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- Cut healthy plant stems using a sharp, sterilized knife at a leaf node. Each cutting should have at least 1 inch of stem and a few healthy leaves.
- Allow the cuttings to dry for a few hours, and then plant them in pots filled with damp potting mix.
- Cover the cuttings and pots with clear plastic baggies to lock in humidity, and place the cuttings in bright, filtered light.
- Water is just enough to keep the soil a little damp, so wait a few weeks for roots to form.
- Once the cuttings have been rooted, remove the plastic bags, repot the cuttings into individual pots (if needed),

Types



Peperomia Argyreia is a favorite.
Nicknamed the “Watermelon” pep, it
has round silvery green leaves.

Credit: Nok Lek

With over 40 types of peperomia to choose from, picking your favorites can be a challenge. Many growers cluster several types of peperomia together to create an appealing display of plants with contrasting leaf shapes and colors. Here are just a few of the most popular peperomias you may want to grow, but be sure to explore other peperomia varieties before making your selection!

- **‘Watermelon’ Peperomia:** A truly funky plant, watermelon peperomia produces glossy, rounded leaves that are striped like a watermelon rind!
- **‘Ripple’ Peperomia:** Ripple peperomias

tractive backdrop for the plant's creamy white flowers.

- **'String of Turtles' Peperomia:** This trailing plant displays beautifully in hanging baskets and its variegated leaves are said to resemble a turtle's shell.

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PESTS/DISEASES

Peperomia are resilient plants that thrive in a range of conditions. But even these hardy houseplants can be troubled by

- **Pests**, like mealybugs, whiteflies, and spider mites, are more likely to affect new peperomia and plants that spend the summer outdoors. Checking plants carefully for pests can prevent problems, while weekly applications of organic soap spray should remove active infestations.
- **Curling or yellowing leaves and leaf drop** are usually caused by overwatering, but they may also result from lighting issues. To avoid these problems, keep peperomia in bright, indirect light and only water them when the top few inches of soil feels dry.
- **Deformed or twisted leaves** can be caused by diseases or watering issues, but they can also result from nutrient deficiencies. Calcium deficiency is particularly common in watermelon peperomias, but it can be remedied by topdressing the soil with bone meal or pulverized eggshells.



mia. Credit: evgeniia_1010

WIT AND WISDOM

- Peperomia plants are also known as “radiator plants” because they grow well on windowsills above radiators and other warm, dry spots.
- Belonging to the *Piperaceae* family, peperomia are distantly related to black pepper plants and their dried seeds look a bit like peppercorns. However, *Piperaceae* aren’t related to nightshades – like bell peppers and chilis!
- Some species of peperomia were used in traditional folk medicine to treat inflammation, asthma, and coughs, and were highly valued for their antibacterial and antiviral properties.

HOUSEPLANT GUIDES

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Lauren is a gardener, writer, and public speaker with over a decade of experience helping others learn about gardening, homesteading, and sustainable living. [Read More from Lauren Landers](#)

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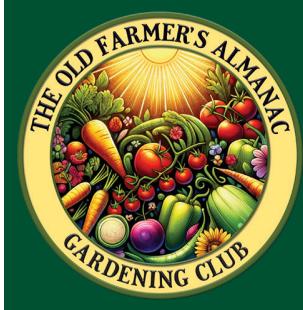
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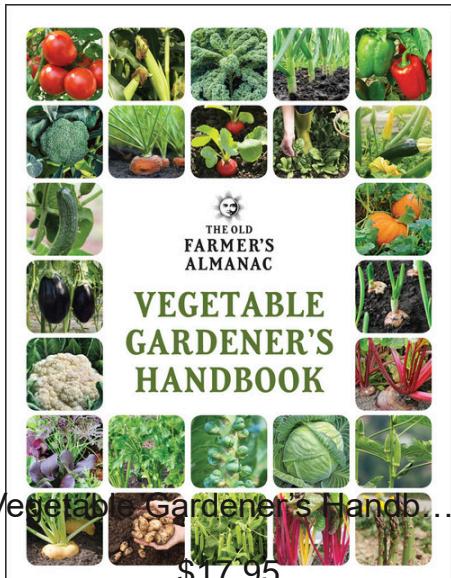
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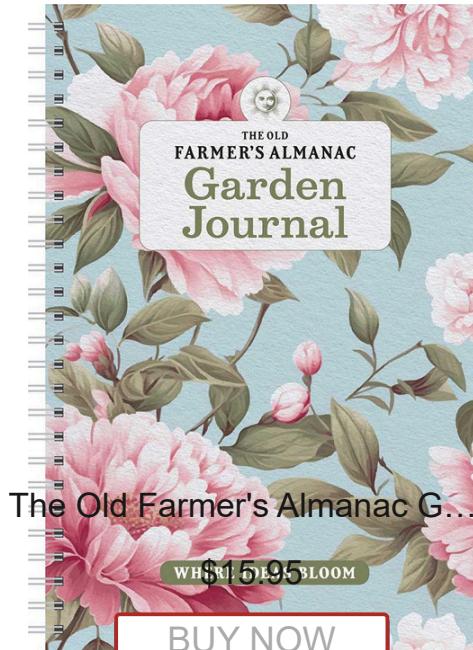
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