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How to Care for Monsteras



Monstera deliciosa houseplant

Photo Credit: Surked/Shutterstock

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Growing Monstera Plants: Watering, Lighting, Repotting, Propagation, and Pests

By [Andy Wilcox](#)

Last Updated: June 26, 2024



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Lush, tropical, and gorgeous, a massive, thriving Monstera in your home is a definite statement that you are a houseplant person. Learn all about growing the *Monstera deliciosa* and the *M. adansonii*, which is commonly called the ‘Swiss Cheese’ plant.

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About Monstera

In North America, the Monstera plant is a houseplant. However, it is a tropical plant in the Araceae family, like *Philodendron*, *Anthurium*, *Epipremnum*, and *Caladium*. In their native portions of southern Mexico and Central America, they are an evergreen vine that grows up tree trunks—up to 70 feet long—up to the rainforest canopy to find light.

The most common variety in the home is *Monstera deliciosa*, which stays between 6 to 8 feet. This large leaf variety makes a wonderful floor plant. The *Monstera deliciosa* is sometimes called a split-leaf philodendron (though it is not actually a philodendron). The huge leathery leaves are as wide as 18 inches with natural perforations. The holes are meant to allow light to reach the other leaves below and also weather tropical storms.



Monstera adds style indoors. Credit:
N.Africa/Shutterstock

The *Monstera adansonii*, is also commonly

small holes in the leaves (versus perforations).

It has a smaller growth habit suitable for sitting on a shelf with trailing vines or in a hanging basket. The care is the same for both tropical plants.

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Monstera grown indoors rarely flower or fruit. However, in their native climate, their fruit is sought after. *Monstera deliciosa* derives part of its name from those tasty fruits flavoring drinks and desserts. The green fruits look like a cob of corn and are said to taste like a banana-mango-pineapple combo.

- [How to Care for Philodendrons](#)
- [Arrowhead Plant Care and Propagation \(Synagonium\)](#)
- [How to Care for Fiddle Leaf Figs](#)

PLANTING

When to Plant Monstera

Since they are often grown as houseplants, monstera can be potted up any time of the year. They need a home with an average temperature of 60° to 85°F and high humidity.

These plants grow in the dappled, partial sun of the tropical forest canopy, so bright but indirect light is what they like. Place them near a sunny window but not in direct sunlight, which can cause leaf scorch.

How to Plant Monstera

Monstera are purchased as young plants, established older specimens, or from online vendors as cuttings. Young and established plants can be repotted if needed, like other houseplants. Cuttings should be rooted first.

- Choose a deep pot with ample room for growing roots and drainage holes.
- Although they are tropical plants, wet,

soggy soil can still lead to root rot.

- Use a rich, fertile potting mix. If in doubt, add some perlite to aid with drainage.
- When transplanting or repotting, wetting the soil in the existing pot and letting it soak in for a few minutes can make removing the plant easier.
- Snip any girdling roots and gently loosen the root ball if it is pot bound.
- Take care to replant your monstera at the same height, with respect to the soil, as before. Don't bury it or leave it perched too high.
- Tamp the fresh soil around the plant firmly to minimize air pockets.
- Sturdy support is necessary to prevent the stems from breaking. Support can be a tree trunk or a moss-covered pole for climbing.

GROWING

Monstera are relatively easy houseplants to grow. Follow these care tips for lush foliage.

- Water this plant thoroughly, then allow the top quarter to one-third part to dry between waterings.
- As with many houseplants, misting leaves helps increase the humidity in dry interior settings. (If your monstera has a moss support pole, mist the moss, too.)



Keep a mister bottle near your plant.

Credit: DimaBerlin

- If humidity is too low, the leaf edges will turn brown. To boost humidity, try setting the pot in a tray lined with pebbles and keep water in the tray. Small, local humidifiers are also available to increase the humidity if your home is especially dry.
- If you are overwatering or the growing medium is too moist, the leaves will “sweat.” If this happens, reduce watering to prevent root rot. Water less in winter.
- For potted monsteras, fertilize several

a diluted liquid fertilizer according to the instructions on the label.



Periodically wipe the leaves with a soft cloth to remove dust. Credit: DimaBerlin

- Monstera needs regular repotting as they grow to accommodate the root system.
- During the summer, you can move your monstera outdoors. Be careful to slowly acclimate the plants to higher light levels, or the plants will sunburn (just like we do!).

Propagating your Monstera

Monstera are simple to propagate and root well in water. Follow these steps to make more Monstera plants (and share them with your plant-loving friends!).

1. Select a piece of stem with at least one node and leaf. If the node has a brown aerial root growing, it's even better. Check this page from the University of

what a monstera node looks like.

2. Cut one inch below the node with sanitized, sharp shears. Rubbing alcohol does an excellent job of sterilizing pruners.
3. Fill a clear-walled jar or vase with water and set the cutting inside. Keep the node submerged. Use bottled water if your tap water is heavily treated.
4. Place the jar in a brightly lit and warm spot out of direct sunlight.
5. Change the water weekly to keep it fresh.
6. In 2 to 4 weeks, your cuttings should start to root. Transplant to moist potting mix once the baby roots are about an inch or two long.

Types

- *Monstera deliciosa* is the classic houseplant of this group. With proper care, it can eventually reach your ceiling and display beautifully fenestrated glossy leaves 1 to 2 feet long.
- *M. adansonii* ("Swiss Cheese Plant") is a

leaves and holes in the leaves. An agile climber if given support, water, and a little fertilizer.

- *M. dubia* has smaller, variegated leaves and loves to climb, reaching about 3 feet.

- Any variegated *Monstera deliciosa* variety!

Unique and rare—and often expensive—variegated plants are suitable to be the centerpiece of your houseplant home.

Cream and white colored bands and patches contrast starkly with the rest of the deep green leaves.

GARDENING PRODUCTS



PESTS/DISEASES

Overwatering is the most common cause of problems with monstera, as with most houseplants. Monstera don't have many disease issues but can be bothered by common pests.

- Aphids
- Scale insects
- Spider mites
- Mealybugs

WIT AND WISDOM

- Learn to recognize monstera and keep your eye out when shopping for groceries. Vendors often bring a truckload of houseplants to sell quickly at big grocery stores. They'll be labeled with something non-descript like "green houseplant" or "tropical foliage plant." *Monstera deliciosa*, especially, is often easy to find hiding in the mix and priced very affordably.
- Large monstera are often on the discount rack because a couple of leaves were broken off or because no one wanted to carry them around. I scored a three-foot tall, es-

brought it home. It took off and now looks like a \$200 plant.

HOUSEPLANT GUIDES

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andy Wilcox



Andy Wilcox is a flower farmer and master gardener with a passion for soil health, small producers, forestry, and horticulture. [Read More from Andy Wilcox](#)

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COMMENTS

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Linda (not verified) 1 year 2 months ago

Mine is just starting out from being cut rooted in
glass container. Just potted it but leaves are small

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and not split anymore. Am I doing something wrong
or just needs time?

[REPLY](#)

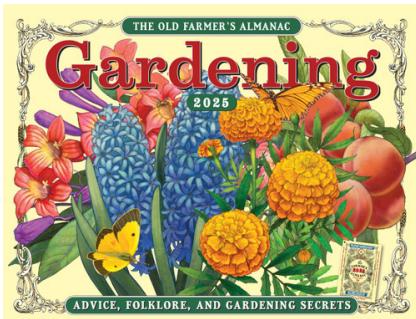
Ann Maucelli McNelly (not verified) 1 year 4

months ago

I had a monstera growing in water for at least 10
YEARS with a Beta fish, and it was small & puny.
Then the fish died so I planted the monstera in soil
about 5 years ago & it is now HUGE.

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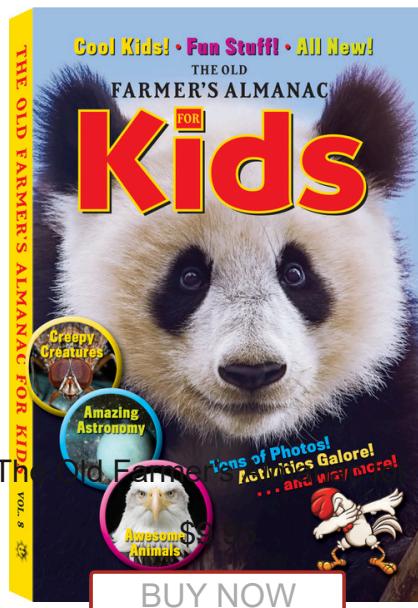
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