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# How to Care for Pothos Plants



Photo Credit: usmee/Shutterstock

Botanical Name: *Epipremnum aureum*

Plant Type: Houseplant

Sun Exposure: Partial Sun

FREE GUIDE!

# Growing Pothos: Watering, Light, Propagation, and Pests

By [Catherine Boeckmann](#)

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Pothos (also called Devil's Ivy) is an easy-to-grow, no-fuss houseplant with shiny, heart-shaped leaves and a vining nature perfect for baskets or draped on shelves. It's also easy to propagate more plants for yourself, your family, and your friends! Learn more.

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## About Pothos

Pothos gets its other common name—**Devil's Ivy**—thanks to its vigorous growth and penchant for returning to life even in the worst conditions! It's the perfect beginner houseplant as it's not picky about its soil and thrives in both indirect, bright light and low light.

Native to tropical French Polynesian islands in the South Pacific, pothos can now be found throughout the world. In the wild, pothos can achieve surprisingly huge sizes, with leaves reaching lengths of more than a foot. In the home, however, it tends to stay much smaller: mature heart-shaped leaves typically range from 4 to 8 inches, and the vine rarely reaches more than a couple of dozen feet in ideal conditions.

**Note:** *Pothos is considered an invasive species in some parts of the United States. Never plant them outdoors, especially in areas with mild winters.*

## Are Pothos Plants Poisonous?

the plant contain a substance called calcium oxalate, which are microscopic crystals that act as a contact irritant.

Ingestion of pothos can cause swelling and a burning sensation in the mouth and throat, as well as intestinal discomfort and indigestion.

#### ADVERTISEMENT

Due to its toxicity, this plant should be grown with caution around curious pets and small children.

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# PLANTING

## Potting Pothos Plants

- Choose a pot with a drainage hole in the bottom. Pothos plants do not like to sit in wet soil; their roots will rot.
- Plant pothos in a general well-draining potting mix (or a soilless mix). If you have it on hand, feel free to mix in a few handfuls of perlite or coco coir to increase the drainage capacity of your potting mix.
- Pothos does well in a hanging basket to show off the vines or in a regular pot on a plant stand. They can be allowed to grow up walls, though their aerial roots—which they use to attach themselves to surfaces like trees or other vertical structures—can strip paint, so keep an eye on where their vines are growing.



## GROWING

### How to Care for Pothos Plants

- Keep pothos plants in a warm location; room temperature is ideal. If exposed to regular drafts or colder temperatures, the plant's growth can be affected.
- Place pothos in bright, indirect light. They will tolerate low light but will not grow as vigorously and may lose some or all of the variegation in their leaves.
- Only water when the soil feels dry. Pothos do not like wet soil; leaves will begin to yellow.
- Apply a diluted liquid houseplant fertilizer about once a month during the spring and summer.

- The large, waxy leaves can gather dust; gently wipe them periodically.
- Remove any rotted or dead stems and any spotted leaves.

## How to Propagate Pothos Plants

Pothos are very easy to propagate, making them a lovely houseplant to share with family, friends, and neighbors.

Alternatively, keep all the offspring to yourself and turn your home into a pothos jungle—we won't judge!

To propagate, follow these steps:

- Locate a healthy-looking vine to take a cutting from. Leaves should be bright and healthy and should not be wilted.
- Make a stem cutting. The ideal stem cutting will be 4-6 inches in length and have 2-3 leaves on it. Cut the vine just below a root node (i.e., the spot on the vine where aerial roots grow out of).
- Once you have your cutting, place the cut end in either a small pot of potting

aware that cuttings can be finicky if they are transferred from water to soil, so be attentive to your new plant if you make the switch.

- After a few weeks, you should start to see roots (in water) or observe that the plant can support itself (in soil).

[Learn more about how to propagate pothos!](#)

## Types

- *Epipremnum aureum* '**Marble Queen**' is one of the most common pothos varieties today. It has smooth green leaves variegated with white and gray.
- *E. aureum* '**Golden Pothos**' has dark green heart-shaped leaves with white or yellow variegation.
- *E. aureum* '**Jade Pothos**' is all green with no variegation.
- *E. aureum* '**Neon**' has showy, bright, light-green leaves.

## GARDENING PRODUCTS





## PESTS/DISEASES

- Spider mites and mealybugs occasionally become a problem.
- **Root rot** can occur when the plant is overwatered, or the soil doesn't drain well. Leaves will turn yellow, and growth will be stunted.

**HOUSEPLANT GUIDES**

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Catherine Boeckmann loves nature, stargazing, and gardening so it's not surprising that she and The Old Farmer's Almanac found each other. She leads digital content for the Almanac website, and is also a certified master gardener in the state of Indiana. [Read More from Catherine Boeckmann](#)

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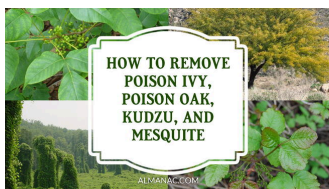
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## COMMENTS

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**Suraksha (not verified)** 6 months ago

Do deers like to eat pothos plant? I have grown these plants in 2 pots on my kitchen window but they are growing well and I was thinking of

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outside. Please reply if deers fancy eating pothos plants. Thanks.

**REPLY**

**Joe Bills** 5 months 3 weeks ago

Deer do indeed munch on pothos if given the opportunity. In the situation you are describing, I don't think there is any obvious way to protect your plants from hungry deer, short of creating a wall or high fence around the patio.

**REPLY**

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**Lorie Frias (not verified)** 1 year 4 months ago

My mom had one of these plants for over 30 years. She neglected it often, but it just kept going. Then it died not long after she did.

**REPLY**

my mom kept these in her home for years, She never repotted or wouldn't give them attention they needed. They were all grown long and very few leaves. I took them home after she passed and did plant them outside and the leaves and plant took off like huge leaves very nice looking but jungle like size leaves. I did keep some small and till this day 10 years later I still have lots of the them. putting them in larger pots and trimming them keeps them tamed and a lot more manageable or you will find they grow out of control if left alone .

**REPLY**

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**Rononpi (not verified)** 2 years 8 months ago

As mentioned in the article, pothos have a weird tendency to be like the gremlins in the old movie. Remember, they were usually very cute, but would get mean and ugly if you fed them after midnight? I live in southern Florida, so pothos do quite well outside. I had one that

inches long and the runners were about 1/8-inch in diameter. One day about five or six years ago, I decided to plant it near a tree in the backyard. It has now climbed all of the way to the top of the 25-foot tree and has leaves that are about a foot wide and 2 feet long. Some of the runners are at least 1-1/2 inches in diameter.

**REPLY**

**Meg (not verified)** 1 year 9 months ago

I own a tree service in North Carolina and we see that all the time especially with wisteria. I'm sure it's a beautiful thing to see and I have a lot of customers who love the ivy on their trees but as this article stated these ivy plants can be extremely invasive and that 25 ft tree you're talking about, hopefully it's not too close to your house or within a distance that if it fell it would reach your house. When ivy of any kind grows around a

will attach into the bark and grow into the heart of the tree and it starts to suck the nutrients out of it like a leech and after a while it will actually drain the tree of all of its nutrients and then completely suffocated from getting any sunlight. We always recommend removing ivy off of a tree because over time it will kill that tree. Just some advice in case it's a tree that's close to you and you don't want it to die and fall in your house, I highly recommend removing the ivy off of it and moving it to something else that it can climb without being detrimental to it. You can get some lattice and attach it to your house and let it grow on it. My grandfather did that and then as it grew he kept it trimmed and made it look like a heart and ended up doing two hearts intertwined and it looked amazing.

**REPLY**

I love your story (& the reference to gremlins 😄) I would love to be able to do that with one of my Pothos- Im sure its amazing to see! Thank you for sharing!!

REPLY

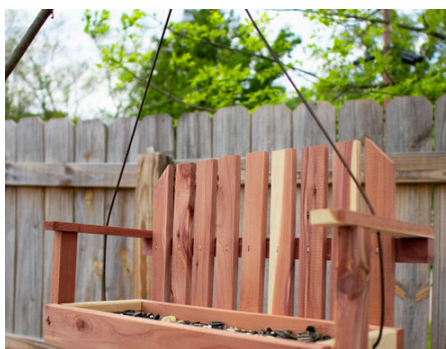
**Sharon Brown (not verified)** 1 year

3 months ago

Another pest of which to be aware on pothos is the fungus gnat. They also like spider plants.

REPLY

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