

Issue No. 1

*Plants
of
Quarantine*

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2020

Introduction

Scattered throughout cities across the globe, behind the towering walls of cement, surrounded by buildings, many may find a small oasis, a personal garden, pothos leaves crawling up the walls, and trailing stems around tables. Over the course of the last 9 months, city dwellers have polished off their green thumbs and saturated their apartments with a curated selection of home plants. Stemming from social media movements to a need for company, we spoke to some current plant owners about their new found green roommates during quarantine.

House plants have been around long before Covid-19 but for many, long term confinement has been a proactive incentive for many to fill their homes with new life. Whether living home alone or needing to spruce up a common space, quarantine has opened doors for new alternatives to connect with nature. Additionally, with an increase in free time, social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and Pinterest, have been the main tool for sharing all things plant related. People are now dedicating their newfound free time to creating new lush gardens in their homes, all the while subsequently caring for themselves. While not everyone has been as successful with their new plants, creators across a multitude of platforms such as TikTok, and local nurseries are extending their knowledge to help new plant parents. Whether stemming from social media movements to a need for company, we spoke to current plant owners about their newfound green roommates during quarantine and their plant careers.

Plants have provided many with their moments of peace in a chaotic world. It was the serenity of Sunday morning plant watering routine, the Wednesday afternoon walk to your local nursery and the Monday evenings of filming new plant TikTok's. Whatever it may have been, it was unifying. It was a moment of clarity and peace. A moment to forget what was happening around you and care for the green sprout in your living room. It was a moment to appreciate the present and the future. Imagine what the baby Monstera plant you bought this month will look like this time next year. Imagine what the world will look like this time next year.

GET WILD WITH *Akeem Caine*

M: I'd love to know about your experience with owning house plants.

A: I think I started buying plants for my space maybe three or four years ago. Just like casually picking up a new plant after work, you know there used to be a plant stand by my law firm so I just started buying one and I was just like hey, this looks good so I kept buying more. And then it became more of an obsession a little bit [laughs]. So now I just keep it going and I love it.

M: What are the benefits of having plants in your home?

A: I mean, I know there are scientific benefits about having plants in your home like it's good for oxygen and all that stuff but honestly, it just boosts my mood. Coming into my room, seeing all the plants, and seeing them thrive is just a really good feeling.

M: Yeah bringing some life.

A: Yes it kind of brings the room together and makes me feel at ease. I love it.

M: How do you take care of your plants and how do they take care of you?

A: Ooo, how do they take care of me? So let me start with how I take care of them. Every time I get a plant I try to read up on the type of species it is before I get it just to make sure that I can actually you know, take care of it and have it in the proper conditions while - in my home. Making sure that it can actually thrive. So I do that, I do a lot of research on the soil and things like that. I'm always trying to, you know, what's the best soil to get for growth. There's so many varieties so it's kind of hard to pick which one is the best one but I have a few that are usually my go-tos. Um, but yeah you kind of get in the groove of things and once you have one plant it's like, then you get a couple, you can kind of take care of a lot. I think I have maybe, 30 house plants at the moment [laughs]. Only in my room too.

M: So it seems like you have accessories too, like you're not just buying a plant and watering it. You're reading up on them, getting them what they need.

A: Exactly, making sure they can thrive. And to answer your question on how they take care of me, I mean, they just like boost my mood. Being home all the time is tough. 24/7 and I work a lot. I worked a lot before quarantine but I'm working even more hours just because it's always right there in front of your face and it's kind of hard to escape. Especially when your office doubles as your bedroom as well so it's like, just coming home or seeing them right when I wake up and the way the light hits them it's just such a pretty image.

M: In your opinion, why do you think there's been a spike in plant sales over quarantine?

A: You know it's interesting because I have a couple of friends that also weren't into plants and all of a sudden they started buying some and it really goes back to what I was saying before about boosting your mood and giving you something to do. I don't consider it a hobby I consider it an extension of my life. Which I guess a hobby is in many ways but it's just second nature to me. For my friends who are learning how to do this it's really interesting to see them like do something out of their norm I guess. Out of their shell in a sense. I think that quarantine is the time for you to realize new things about yourself or to just explore new avenues of your life and sometimes plants can open up doors for people that they didn't realize were there. So I think people are starting to buy more because it just really makes them happy and it's nice to have. Again, being trapped at home it's just really nice.

M: Do you consider yourself one of the lucky ones? Because you kind of already had experience and knowledge going into it?

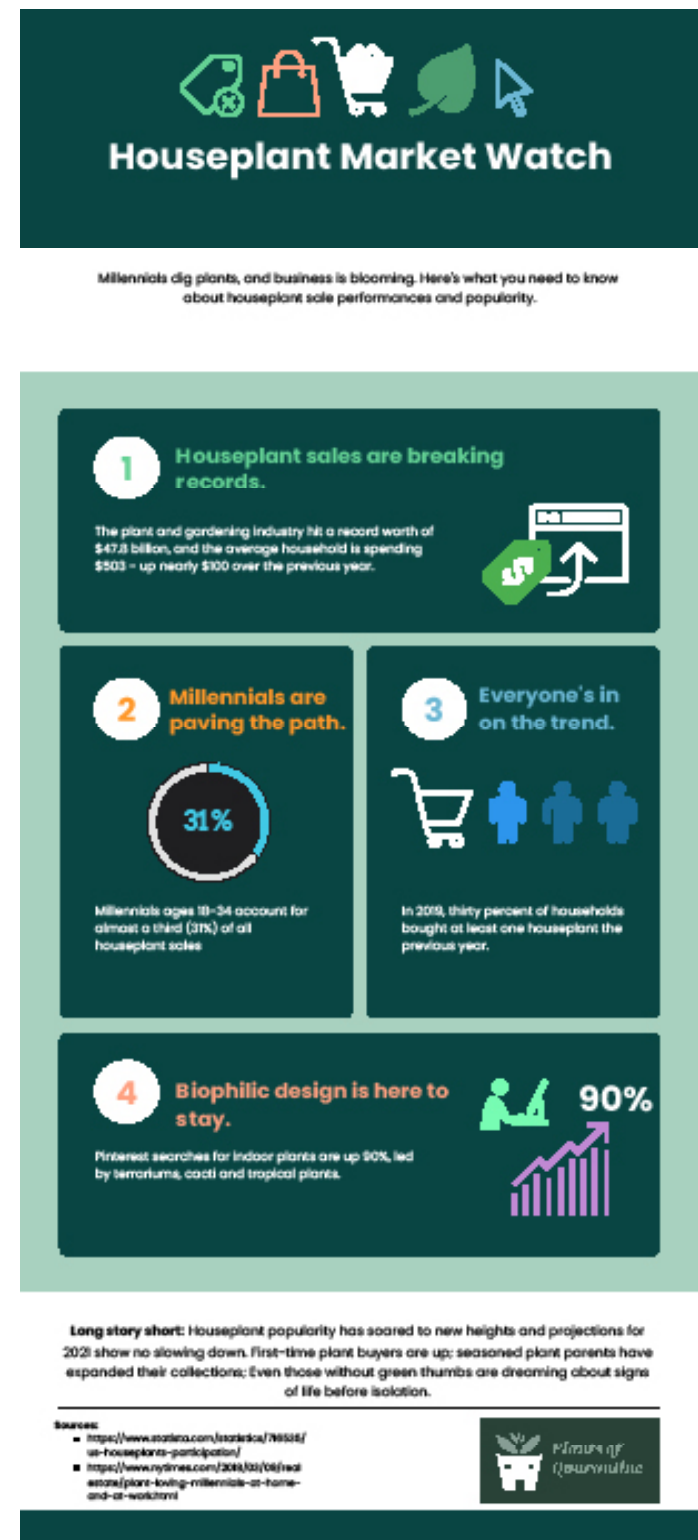
A: 100%, it's funny because since quarantine my interest in plants has heightened so much more where it's like, I'm taking plant classes to learn more about the species and learn about the science behind it. So when people ask me questions about their own plants I can help them. I do have a lot of friends that come to me and ask me things. Whenever I post my plants on instagram and what not. It's interesting that I can continue this plant journey that I'm on and also help others so it's a really rewarding experience.



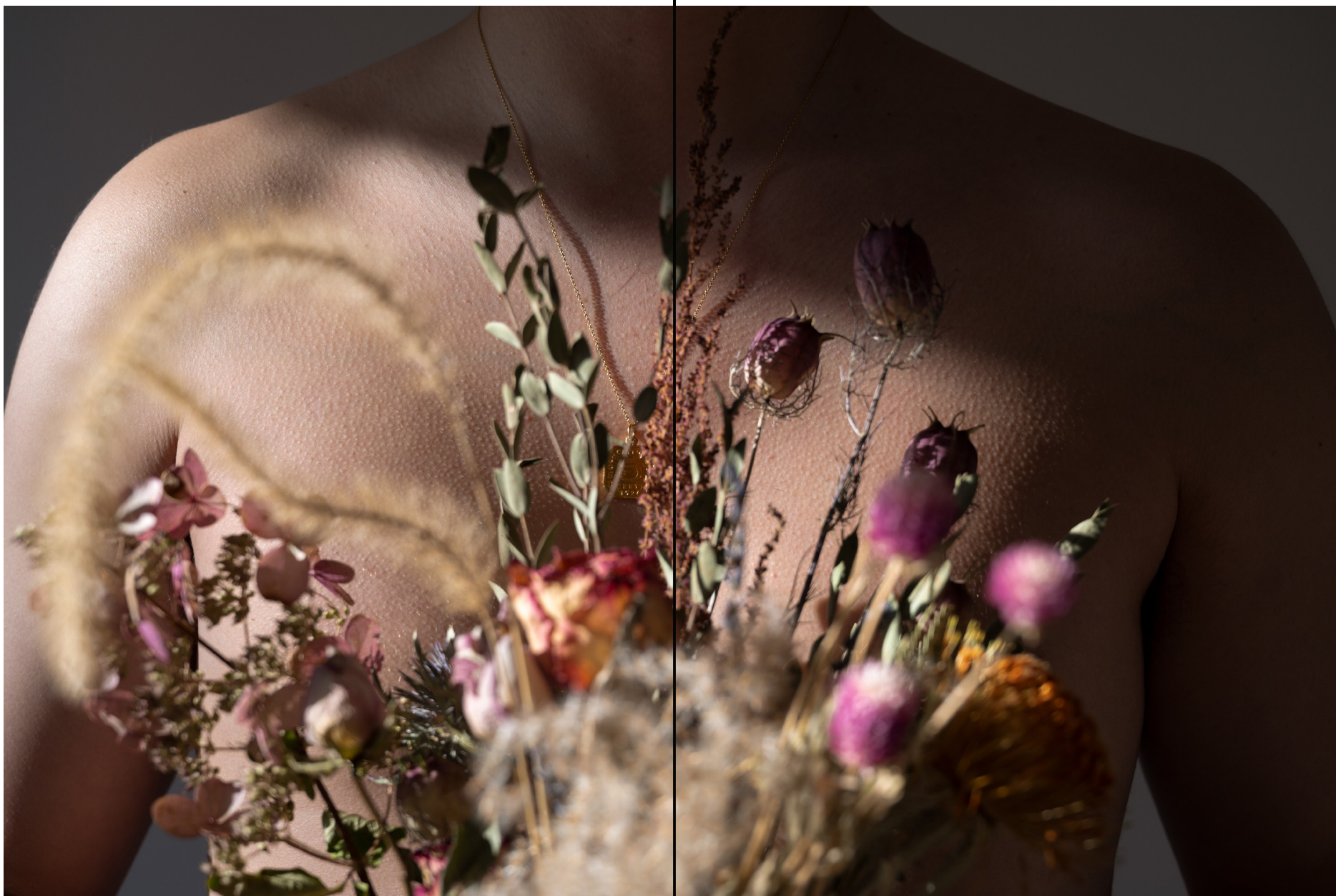
Akeem Caine pictured with a few of his favorite plants.

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- Akeem Caine, 2020



Consider this...



Dried Flowers *last much longer than fresh cuts'
10 day average lifespan, are less wasteful and equally as beautiful.*



The Indoor Generation

Plant Care 101



Aerate the soil of your plants before you water them.

Rice water is a great fertilizer.

Find plants that best fit your lifestyle.

Find a sweet spot in your apartment for good lighting - if your home doesn't have ample sunlight, invest in a grow light.

Sprinkle a small amount of cinnamon onto your plant if it's struggling with nats.

Pothos are great beginner plants - they're easy to take care of!

Browning on the edges of leaves may indicate sunburn - try moving the plant to indirect sunlight.



Be Nice.

Get Lots of Sleep.

Drink Plenty of Water.

Artwork by
Brooke Bourgeois



"You said you got that kid Jack to water our plants while we were away?"



"They said we couldn't have it all, but here we are - with careers AND house plants."

End



Self Portrait - Megan Pulling 2020