

Planting the seeds

Why houseplants could be the key to positive self-care

Even though February is the shortest month, it feels as though we're in the longest stretch of winter. Winter has its own beauty, but the indoor air, unpredictable weather conditions and short daylight hours can provide challenges to personal wellness.

Caring for houseplants can be an excellent self-care activity year-round but may offer the greatest benefits during the winter months. Interest in houseplants has surged, with the U.S. average annual household spending on houseplants rising from \$25 in 2016 to \$50 in 2018, according to the National Gardening Association.

Plants not only beautify homes and offices, they have been shown to provide benefits to hospital patients. They bring the outdoor landscape indoors, delivering a healthy dose of green amidst the monochromatic grays and whites of the winter landscape.

When successfully tending to houseplants, many people report a



sense of satisfaction and pride in watching them thrive and change throughout the year. They enjoy peace, calm and enjoyment while living and working among their plants.

Plant stylist and author Hilton Carter, whose Instagram page has 257k followers, writes in his book *Wild at Home: How to Style and Care for Beautiful Plants* that "without plants in my life, I'm not sure I'd find a good moment to let down my hair, take it all in and breathe".

This quote really struck me as it echoed my experience with my small collection of houseplants. When I get too busy and distracted, I realize that I've neglected caring for them. I feel better when I stop and take the time to water, mist and dust my plants. In that way they serve as reminders to slow down and to take care.

Two other recommended titles available are *Decorating with Plants: What to Choose, Ways to Style and How to Make them Thrive* by Baylor Chapman and *House of Plants: Living with Succulents, Air Plants and Cacti* by Caro Langton and Rose Ray. Find them at cadl.org/catalog.



A librarian for 20 years, Cheryl is responsible for the purchase of adult non-fiction books, DVD/Blu-rays and music for Capital Area District Libraries. She is also a co-host of their Reader's Roundtable podcast.

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