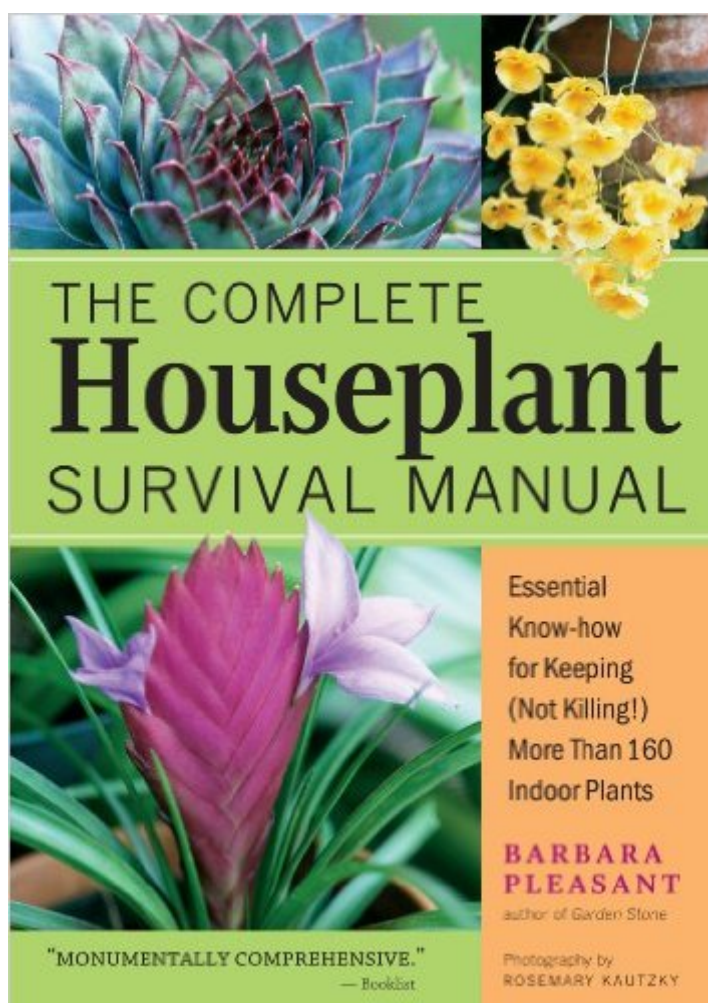


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# The Complete Houseplant Survival Manual: Essential Know-How For Keeping (Not Killing) More Than 160 Indoor Plants



## Synopsis

It's a whole new world of houseplants, so make yourself at home in it! If you love the idea of keeping houseplants, but struggle to care for them, you'll find solace and invaluable advice in this comprehensive guide from expert gardener Barbara Pleasant. Even experienced houseplant enthusiasts will benefit from Pleasant's expansive knowledge of indoor gardening, which includes personality profiles, growing needs, and troubleshooting tips for 160 blooming and foliage varieties. Create a greener world, one houseplant at a time.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This well organized and informative book covers 160 houseplants. Arranged in 3 sections - "Blooming houseplants", "Foliage houseplants" and 'Houseplant Care," the tops of the pages are color-coded for fast access. Plants are listed by their botanical name but you can look up their common names in the index or a Botanical/Common Name Cross Reference chart in the back of the book. Almost all plants are given a 2 page spread which includes a description, a chart with specifications indicating light levels, temperature, fertilizer, water and soil needs, repotting advice, longevity, propagation techniques, selection and display tips. A troubleshooting guide provides characteristics of what to look for if a plant is in trouble and what you should do about it. Plants with various varieties, like bromeliads, bulbs, cacti, orchids, ferns and palms are covered in more expanded sections. The color photos (included for each plant) are outstanding. The final chapter, "Houseplant Care," covers aspects such as containers, fertilizers, insect pests, propagation, plant

characteristics and identification tips, terrariums and watering techniques. The semi-hard cover and flexible binding make the book easy to flip through and the attractive lay-out and page colorings make this book a joy to use. A must-have reference for serious houseplant growers!

Each plant merits a color photo, making them easy to spot the one you want. The care instructions include light temperature, fertilizer, water, soil, repotting, longevity, propagation, selections (varieties), and display tips. The plants that are particularly easy-to-care-for are marked with an icon so beginners can spot them. In the back is a cross reference with the botanical name and the common name.

Until recently my houseplant experience was limited to two spider plants and a ficus, both of which I managed to kill in about a year. I actually credit the plants for holding on so long, since they got horrible light, no fertilizer, and a little water every other month. I recently decided to give it another go, but I was fairly nervous because I didn't know anything about how to take care of houseplants in general, let alone the special requirements of the commonly available varieties. I checked out several books before settling on this one, which is a good compromise between encyclopedic coverage of different plants and practical advice about plant care. Each of the 160+ plants in the book has at least one page of information and at least one full-color photo (sometimes more). The entry for each plant gives some basic information, specific requirements and things to watch out for, and a short troubleshooting FAQ. The book is divided into three parts, on flowering houseplants, non-flowering houseplants, and houseplant care. The final section on houseplant care goes into a lot more depth on just about every topic under the sun, including soil, light, water, fertilizer, seasons, training, propagation, leaching, repotting (and potting up, and top-dressing), and has a lot of helpful illustrations to get you through. At the end of the book there is a big list of resources, including plant clubs and sources for more in-depth information. Right now I have 17 houseplants, all chosen without benefit of this book, just because they looked nice. But they're all in here. The book is NOT comprehensive, though--160 species is a lot but it is hardly exhaustive, and your local garden center or home supply warehouse probably has plants that aren't covered here. Still, almost all the common species and varieties are in here, and it is very nice to have instructions and tips that are specific to each plant. If you have some plants that aren't in here, you might want to pair this with a more taxonomically comprehensive book, such as *The House Plant Expert* or one of the houseplant encyclopedias. I should add that the book is very well written, interesting, engaging, and accessible. I find myself picking it up to look up one thing and an hour later I'm still reading. Oh, and all my new

plants are doing great. Mostly thanks to this book.

I was so excited to get this book, and thought that it would be so helpful to me in taking care of the plants that I already had and also to help me to buy new plants. My first disappointment was that very few of the plants that I already owned seemed to be in the book. I don't have unusual house plants, just things that I have found at pretty standard stores. I was disappointed, but decided that I would go the other way around - I would choose plants that were in the book, and then go to the nursery to buy those. I chose about 30 plants out of the book as options for things to buy, but to my surprise the nursery only had a few of those. I don't know if the problem is that there are just too many houseplants for a book like this to be useful, or what. As far as content for the plants that are covered, I would give the book four stars. It's pretty good and pretty well organized. It includes information about watering and sun as well as troubleshooting for common problems (though again, the problems that I tend to have with my houseplants are often not listed). It lists ideal temperature ranges for each plant, but I wish that it also listed the range that the plants can tolerate. I don't heat my house very warm in the winter time, so I was really hoping that the book could help me to choose some plants that could make it through the winter at my house, but it doesn't. For example, I know from experience that jade plants can tolerate temperature extremes fairly well - they do fine at least as low as 45 degrees and also in the heat during the summer. But the book lists the temperature range for jades as "average room temperatures (65-75 degrees F)". That's helpful if you're trying to decide how warm to heat or cool your house in order to best suit your houseplants, but it's not that helpful if you're trying to decide which plants to buy based on the temperature in your house. I love the title of this book, I'm just disappointed that I didn't like the contents more too.

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