

Dracaena

The Dracaena family is unique in that its varieties come in so many different shapes, sizes, and colors that you can find the perfect place in your home for each one. They are among one of the most reliable, upright growing foliage plant families ranging from the tall Corn Plant (*D. fragrans* 'Massangeana'), to the spiky Dragon Tree (*D. marginata*), and the commonly grown Striped Dracaena (*D. deremensis*). Dracaenas are considered to be one of the best plant choices for naturally purifying the environment indoors especially the thicker leaf varieties.

Flowering and foliage- Be aware that Dracaena may range in size from 18" to 6' tall. Foliage is attractive with light green, white, yellow, even pink stripes on the margins of the leaves or in the center. Leaves may be a couple inches wide to thin and spiky. The ends of Dracaena leaves often become dry and brown indicating too much light, lack of humidity, and/or dry soil conditions. These brown tips can be removed easily with a pair of sharp, clean scissors.

Light- Requires bright to medium indirect light. Placement near a north, east, or filtered west and south window will work well to keep the foliage color from fading.

Temperature- Grow in average household temperatures (60-80 degrees).

Watering- Apply water thoroughly keeping the soil evenly moist spring through fall. In winter let the soil dry slightly in between watering applications. Spray misting or using a humidity tray year round will always benefit foliage plants.

Fertilize- Use Osmocote for Houseplants in the spring lasting all growing season, or use a water soluble multi-purpose plant food once every two weeks April through September.

Other maintenance needs- Repot in spring once every two to three years if the plant becomes pot bound. Use a sterile potting mix with 50% or more organic matter (peat, manure, etc.) Propagate by taking tip or soft stem cuttings, dipped into rooting hormone and planted in moist soil. Larger, woody trunk varieties can be propagated by air-layering. Be aware that Dracaena all shed their bottom leaves as they grow taller. These will yellow and brown, needing to be removed from the stem. An insecticidal soap spray and a systemic insecticide are best at controlling any infestation the plant may develop. Dusting the wide leaf varieties is helpful too.