

Gardening Indoors During the Winter Months

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Your house plants that looked so good in June are beginning to look straggly. The problem is there is not as much good growing light during the winter months.

Research shows that the light levels in January are one-third the intensity of June's light. Plants respond to the quality and number of hours of light. That is why it's hard to keep your plants looking good.

If the light intensity is too low, leaves will turn yellow, the plant will become leggy reaching for the light, and there may be no flowering or poor flower color. The answer is to use supplemental light-There are several options for supplemental lighting of varying quality. Incandescent bulbs are not desirable since they produce too much heat and can burn the plant if placed too close. Fluorescent tubes can be used but do not give you very large growing area.

One tube will illumine only an area 6 inches wide times the length of the tube, and you loose good light on the ends. Use the longest tubes possible with several side by side. Use a combination of cool white (for the blue rays) and warm white (for red rays, required for flowering). This will supply most of the light spectrum necessary.

When a larger growing area is needed use the halide .Agrosun bulb, the latest technology The sunburst bulb gives you a growing area of 2' x 3' with 175 watts, 5' at 5* with 250 watts, and 8' x 8' with ^00 watts. An optional Hyrofarm Light Track gives you even more area, the Bulb holding fixture is attached to the track and moves back and forth, simulating the movement of sun, traveling about 6 feet in 20 minutes.

Begonia: Easily grown under full-spectrum light. Needs' at least 16 hours per day of high-intensity lighting to flower. Some species prefer medium light levels.

Bromeliad: Most species easily grown. Prefer high intensities of full-spectrum light 16 to 18 hours per day. Require very little attention. Many colorful species and leaf varieties. Many produce an inflorescence which is colorful and long lasting.

Cactus: 14 to 18 hours bf high-intensity light each day could not flower under fluorescent light before advent of full-spectrum Vita-Lite. Ultraviolet, missing in other artificial lights, most important. Sandy soil very little watering or fertilizing. Prefer quite cool dark cycle.

Caladium: Medium-intensity light and humid atmosphere. Very colorful. Many leaf patterns.

Dwarf Fruit Trees: Require very high-intensity light 14 to 16 hours per day Fig, lemon, lime, and orange trees will blossom several times a year and produce fruit.

Geraniums: Can be grown from seeds or cuttings. Most varieties require 16 to 18 hours of high-intensity light each day. Many miniature and dwarf varieties are available

Gesneriads: Most Gesneriad species prefer 15 to 16 hours of medium-intensity light per day. African violets (Saintpaulia) belong to this colorful

flowering plant family. Medium- intensity light for 12 hours a day and 12 hours darkness is preferred. They are easily grown and tolerate wide variations in light intensity.

Gloxinias: High-intensity light 14 to 16 hours each day. Tend carefully with special attention to fertilizer, humidity and water to prevent blossom blast. Large spectacular flowers.

Orchids: Most species (but not all) need high-intensity light 14 to 18 hours per day, with careful control of temperature and humidity. Miniatures and lower light-requiring orchids are available.

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Appears in *Hobby Greenhouse Magazine*, Winter 2008.