

INSIGHT

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Stress Less with Plants

It's one of those days where you feel like you've done everything you possibly can to stay sane during this pandemic. You've probably taken up a new hobby, exercised like a pro athlete, spoken foreign languages, or binge-watched countless TV series in one sitting. But have you tried gardening?

Gardening is a proven step towards happiness, and it's also an ideal escape from the stresses of everyday life. People who sit in front of a computer screen all day long, wandering through digital landscapes, are always looking for a chance to interact with the real world and living things. A little something that needs light, air, and some fresh water in the morning.

Written on the Journal of Public Health, scientists from Essex and Westminster universities found that less than 30 minutes of allotment gardening produces a measurable and beneficial health affect such as an instant reduction in stress and fatigue, as well as a boost to self-esteem, vigour and a general feeling of good health. Repeating it as little as once a week has the power to do long-term good for body and mind.

Now, gardening doesn't necessarily mean you must have a garden to begin with. It can be done indoors. Even before the Coronavirus triggered a renewed interest in Victory Gardens, indoor gardening was already experiencing a comeback. During both World Wars, "war gardens" or "Victory Gardens" provided critical nutrition to both US & British populations. Gardening became a patriotic duty, and "Dig for Victory" propaganda a part of popular culture.

Whilst veteran gardeners have long preferred vegetables, herbs and other edible plants, this new trend has put an emphasis on other plant species: *succulents*.

According to Wikipedia, succulents are plants with parts that are thickened, fleshy and engorged, usually to retain water in arid climates or soil conditions. It comes from the Latin word *sucus*, meaning 'juice', or 'sap'. Throughout history, succulents have been used as herbal medicines, torture devices, food, dye sources, hallucinogens, and fixtures in religious ceremonies. But their captivating silhouettes, ability to endure long treks, and portability have carried them into the 21st century as the ideal collector's item. The plants have graduated from filler greenery, to water-wise landscaping fixtures, to Instagrammable pioneers of the burgeoning online plant economy.

Try with a simple Aloe vera plant. Place it on your windowsill or wherever there's enough sunlight, a container with good drainage and only water when the soil dries out. If it somehow dies, you can still extract its gel to treat minor burns, sunburn, cuts, dry skin, eczema, acne, lower blood sugar or even as a natural laxative. Nothing goes to waste!

So go get green and send your picture-perfect plants decor to stara.pedro@jakland.co.id.

Happy planting!



Yours trully,

the community editor