

Monstera Deliciosa: General Information and History

Native to the rainforest of Central America, *Monstera deliciosa* has become a sensation for its unique holes in its leaves. Due to the distinctive leaves, many people have craved having this beautiful and easy houseplant to complete their home decor. As a result, the distinctive leaves have caused the *Monstera deliciosa* to earn the nickname “Swiss Cheese Plant.”

The holes serve a purpose beyond just looking cool. The theory is the holes increase the sunlight that reaches the rainforest floor while still allowing the leaf to expand as much as possible. However, a second theory is that the holes allow rain to drip down rather than pool and damage the leaf during a downpour in the rainforest. As the plant matures, the leaves eventually reach the edge and open up.

As the plant can naturally be found from southern Mexico to Panama, the name *deliciosa*, meaning “delicious,” comes from the edible fruit from the plant. Unfortunately, though, growing indoors doesn’t bode well for the fruit to grow. When the plant does produce fruit, the flavor is a mix between a banana and a pineapple. Unfortunately, the rest of the plant is toxic and can be harmful to pets.

Care

Light

Since the *Monstera deliciosa* is native to Central America, it loves bright to medium indirect light. Therefore, it does best when placed in a room with plenty of natural sunlight throughout the day. Avoid placement right in front of the window as direct and intense sunlight is not the best for it, although it is known to withstand it.

The best temperature suited for *Monstera deliciosa* is between 65 to 85 degrees Fahrenheit (18 to 30 degrees Celsius). Avoid having the plant be in temperatures below 60 degrees Fahrenheit (15 degrees Celsius).

Soil

Use a potting mix that is suited to drain well. Mixing in perlite or lava rocks in the soil is another option to help the soil aerate. Another way to assist the soil in drying between waterings is to use a porous pot, such as terra-cotta, to evaporate any excess moisture.

Water

You should water the plant about every one to two weeks. The soil should have the chance to dry out between each watering. Add more water when exposed to brighter light. The plant does prefer a humid environment, if possible.

If it is in a fairly dry room, you can either get the plant its own humidifier or mist it a few times a week. Plan on changing your watering schedule during the year. Give more water during the summer months than you do during the winter months.

Fertilizer

Depending on your growth interests, you can give *Monstera deliciosa* fertilizer three or four times a year. If you find that you need more fertilizer during the growing season, use a diluted fertilizer instead of regular water. The plant will absorb what it needs and drain the rest.

Pests/Disease/Common Issues

This plant is relatively easy to grow and maintain, which makes it an excellent house plant. To prevent common pests and keep the plant clean, wipe the leaves down with a paper towel or damp sponge. More often than not, there shouldn't be any problems with pests. However, if you encounter pests, use a natural pesticide or wipe the leaves down once a week.

One common problem is the leaves turning brown at the edges. The cause of the issue is either the plant is getting over or underwatered. First, check the soil to see if it is still moist between waterings or if it is completely dry. Then, adjust the watering schedule accordingly.

If the *Monstera deliciosa* seems to be wilting or the potting mix is dry, increase the water given to it. On the other hand, if the leaves are yellow or it has black stems, the plant is getting too much water. As the houseplant grows, the plant can get heavy, causing the stems to break. If this is happening, give it some solid support to help prevent any more breakage.

Pruning

You should plan on the plant growing about one to two feet every year when grown indoors. In comparison to other houseplants, the roots of *Monstera deliciosa* do not damage surfaces. If the roots begin to stick out, feel free to trim. However, a better option is to tuck the roots back into the pot if possible. The plant does well to being cut, which can easily be used for propagation.

Propagation

To propagate, you can cut off a leaf and stem. Then, include a node in the cut portion. The node is a slight bump where the roots will expand from. Place it in a glass container with water, which you should change every three to five days.

After a few weeks, if the propagation was successful, there should be roots sprouting. In a couple of months, the roots will start to look thick and healthy. At that point, you can transfer it to the soil. Keep the soil reasonably moist as the plant adapts to the ground and starts to grow.

Potting/Repotting

Plan on repotting the plant every couple of years. When you repot *Monstera deliciosa*, make the new pot a little bit wider and deeper to adapt to the new growth. When you transition to a new pot, fill about a third with fresh potting soil, then add a stake for the stem to be supported by. Set the roots into the pot and fill it with soil. Attach the stem to the stake to ensure there is support.