

# Houseplants make holiday gifts of life

by Mardi Letson

**A**re you searching for a holiday gift that is beautiful, useful, healthful and locally sourced? Look no further than your favorite garden shop for a lovely houseplant that will offer months—if not years—of cheer.

To improve the chances for long-lasting enjoyment, select plants that thrive on little care. For something super easy, consider a tillandsia or air plant, which requires no soil and only a weekly soaking. Grown for their unusual elongated foliage, air plants are stunning nested in a bowl, hung from a wire or tucked inside a miniature terrarium. Linda Clemens at BB Barns Garden Center says, “You can use nearly anything to hold a tillandsia—just do not display them in water.”

Want an elegant offering? A colorful lady slipper orchid produces a breath-taking blossom that can last weeks. To extend the show, choose a specimen that has a newly opening bud.

Love the natural beauty of our local mountain landscape? Bring the feel of the outdoors inside with a dwarf conifer

such as a lemon cypress or a Norfolk Island pine.

Want to gift something that will improve indoor air quality? Try a pothos, peace lily or English ivy. Laura Carter at Thyme in the Garden says, “Many plants that purify the air are also easy to grow indoors.”

For the cook, pick up a potted collection of herbs that

will thrive through most of the winter. Thyme, rosemary, chives, parsley and oregano will happily provide a fresh flavor to savory dishes all season.

For a fragrant gift, chose a citrus in bloom. The scent of this plant will permeate a home and remind the recipient of you each time they come home to it.

Once you have the perfect gift in hand, Rose Bartlett of Rose’s Garden Shop says, “Dress up your plant by dropping it into a unique cachepot, an aged moss-covered terra cotta container or a simple wrap of burlap with a festive ribbon. Finish with a tuft of moss to cover the exposed soil.”

A well-chosen plant at the holidays will endure through the

bleak of winter, providing

a beautiful reminder of the lushness of warmer weather. And for the inexperienced gardener, it just might be an introduction to a lifetime of loving plants! 



Illustration by Stephanie M. Sipp