

Louisiana SUPERIOR INTERIORS



Monstera deliciosa

COMMON NAMES:

Swiss cheese plant, split-leaf philodendron, Mexican breadfruit and hurricane plant.



RECOMMENDED USE:

Indoor houseplant.



USDA HARDINESS ZONES:

10B through 11.



EXPOSURE:

Bright indirect light. Does well in medium-light locations of 100-foot to 200-foot candles or about 3-6 feet from a window.



SIZE:

Indoor average growth of 5-8 feet tall and 4 feet wide. In native conditions can grow up to 50 feet in length by 10 feet wide.



HABIT:

Evergreen, herbaceous perennial vine. Benefits from staking.



BLOOM TIME:

Spring to mid-summer, creamy white, large spadix with tiny blooms surrounded by a spathe. Rarely bloom indoors but flowering can occur on mature plants under optimal conditions.



MAINTENANCE CATEGORY:

Easy.



WATER USE:

Moderate. Water weekly and mist often when humidity is low.



PROPAGATION:

Division, stem cuttings and layering.



HIGHLIGHTS:

Prized for its distinctive glossy, dark green, heart-shaped leaves that are perforated and deeply lobed. This vining, indoor foliage plant is an eye-catching centerpiece for any area. The tropical foliage can be accompanied with decorative stakes to support climbing leaves. Large leaves atop thick, long green petioles make monstera leaves a great greenery cutting for display vases.



TOXICITY:

Toxic to cats and dogs but not fatal. Oral irritation of mouth, tongue and lips. May cause excessive drooling or vomiting.

SUMMARY/PLANT DESCRIPTION

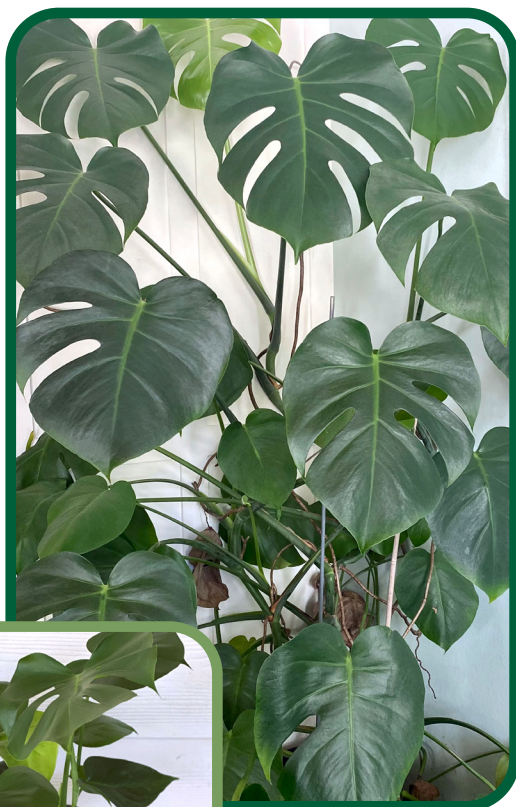
The genera *Monstera* boasts a diverse range of species with more than 40 found in this group. This means you have numerous options to choose from with variations in color and characteristics. One of the most commonly grown is *Monstera deliciosa*. The specific epithet or species name *deliciosa* means “delicious,” referring to the edible fruit.

An aroid of the Araceae family, *M. deliciosa* is native to the forests of southern Mexico and Guatemala. Commonly referred to as split-leaf philodendron, this plant is not a true philodendron. Another common name is Swiss cheese plant, due to the fenestration or holes in the leaves of the plants. These tropical plants are best known for their bright green,



heart-shaped leaves with deep lobes. While there are many theories for the purpose of this adaptation, the current consensus is that these holes allow for greater leaf volume and increased sunlight to pass through to lower foliage. The plant also makes large aerial roots that are used to stabilize the plant by anchoring it to trees or other structures and helping it climb. Aerial roots also absorb moisture and dissolved nutrients from rainwater running down the roots and trees of those grown in their natural tropical rainforest environments. Indoor grown plants do not commonly flower, but when optimal conditions are met in mature plants, flowers can occur followed by fruit that is said to have a taste of a pineapple and a banana. This is why it is also known as Mexican breadfruit. The fruit takes up to 12 months to mature. The fruit appears to have layers of scales like a pinecone, and when scales begin to fall off, the fruit becomes soft, signifying ripeness. Variegated monstera are highly prized and very gorgeous. There are a few cultivars of variegated monstera that sport yellow and white coloring that range from splotches to speckles or both.

Monstera deliciosa can benefit from decorative stakes to support climbing leaves.
Photos by Heather Kirk-Ballard



Younger leaves of monstera do not display the holes and slashes. They develop as the leaves age.

The four main types of variegated *Monstera deliciosa* are:

- **Monstera Albo Borsigiana Variegated** or **Variegata** arose from genetic mutations in plants grown from seed with random variegation of several colors and patterns. It is an uncommon and costly subspecies characterized by its white, speckled coloring and large blotches.
- **Monstera Thai Constellation** is one of the most popular varieties, with tiny cream specks that resemble a starry constellation.
- **Monstera Mint Variegata** has minty green and white variegation.
- **Monstera Aurea** or **Marmorata** sports golden to yellowish variegation.

REQUIREMENTS

Monstera requires a well-drained, acidic to neutral soil or potting media that is rich in organic material. It loves bright, indirect sunlight. Be aware that too much direct light during the summer can burn foliage. A stake may also be necessary to prevent older leaves from drooping. Planters with greater depth are perfect for monstera to support its upwards growth and secure vining leaves with a stake. The bottom third of planters can be filled with light sandy or medium loamy soils, then the top half with more peat-based soil.

GROWTH HABIT

Monstera is a climbing vine that can be grown vertically by staking. Not using a stake will encourage monstera to grow horizontally over their pots, giving a cascading look, but large leaves become heavy and can cause tipping of light containers.

CARE AND MAINTENANCE

Originally from the equator, monstera loves humidity. Be sure to give plants regular waterings and mist foliage, but let soil slightly dry out between watering to avoid root rot. You can fertilize with a balanced liquid fertilizer three to four times per year or during late spring to promote growth. Monstera can be easily propagated from cuttings or air-layering with sphagnum moss. Low light situations can stunt growth. Some common pests include thrips and mealybugs, which can be avoided by wiping dust and debris off of foliage with a damp sponge. Neem oil, insecticidal soaps and other alternative organic options can also be used.

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