

peperomia

BOTANICAL NAME

Peperomia
(pep-er-O-mee-a)

COMMON NAMES

Radiator plant, Emerald-ripple *Peperomia*, Baby rubber plant, Watermelon *Peperomia*, Yerba linda

DESCRIPTION

Peperomias are hardy, evergreen foliage plants, some of which are succulents, that do well in homes and offices as well as in dish and bottle gardens. With hundreds of species, their forms vary widely, from trailing to bushy to upright varieties. Leaf shapes and markings are also diverse, with some varieties featuring smooth, waxy leaves and others ridged, hairy surfaces. Well-known varieties like *P. caperata* (emerald-ripple *Peperomia*) and *P. griseoargentea* (ivy-leaf *Peperomia*) have heart-shaped leaves.

DECORATIVE LIFE

With proper care, these plants can live indoors for years.

AVAILABILITY

Year-round.

in-store and consumer care

LIGHT Average indoor light is sufficient. Keep the plants out of direct sun. *Peperomias* do well in fluorescent light.

WATER In spring through fall, water regularly with tepid water when the soil is dry. Water less frequently in winter.

HUMIDITY During the summer, mist the leaves occasionally.

TEMPERATURE Average warm indoor temperatures are appropriate; avoid temperatures below 55 F.

FERTILIZER Feed twice monthly with a half-diluted plant food; reduce feedings in winter.

PROPAGATION Plants can be propagated



P. OBTUSIFOLIA
BABY RUBBER PLANT



P. CAPERATA
EMERALD-RIPPLE PEPEROMIA

through stem cuttings (from upright or trailing varieties) or leaf cuttings (from bushy varieties).

REPOTTING *Peperomias* are slow-growing but should be repotted as needed, every one to two years.

challenges

PESTS AND PROBLEMS Watch for mealybugs, spider mites and whiteflies. Keep plants adequately hydrated and treat any problems immediately if they occur, by removal with a cotton swab or insecticide as indicated.

LEAF PROBLEMS Leaf loss can result if plants are allowed to wilt between waterings or if light levels are too low. Temperatures that are too low also can cause leaves to drop. A rapid drop in temperature can result in brown-tipped leaves. Excessive watering can cause wilted leaves, discolored stems and edemas, where the leaves show small bumps (pimples) on their undersides that can take on a corklike appearance.



PEPEROMIA ARGYREIA
WATERMELON PEPEROMIA

fun facts

FAMILY *Peperomias* are members of the *Piperaceae*, or pepper, family.

WHAT'S IN A NAME The genus name comes from the Greek roots "*peperi*," meaning "pepper," and "*homoios*," meaning "resembling." *Peperomias* are similar in appearance to the genus *Piper*, which yields peppercorns and peppers.

HOME SWEET HOME The plants are native to the tropical Americas—Latin America and northern South America.

BREATHING EASY *Peperomias* are among plants that remove air pollutants such as those found in building materials and cigarette smoke.

FAN FAVORITE *P. caperata* (emerald-ripple *Peperomia*), which features rippled leaves that can be dark green, reddish or silver gray depending on variety, is a bushy plant and is the most commonly sold *Peperomia* species, according to *The Houseplant Encyclopedia*.

UNIQUE FLOWERS Some *Peperomias* produce long spikes of green to cream-colored flowers. One reference describes the stalks as resembling "mouse tails." **sfr**

Some information provided by:
Botanica, by R.G. Turner Jr. and Ernie Wasson
The Chain of Life Network®, www.chainoflifenet.org
The Complete Houseplant Survival Manual,
by Barbara Pleasant
The House Plant Expert, by Dr. D.G. Hessayon
The Houseplant Encyclopedia, by Ingrid Jantra
and Ursula Krüger

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