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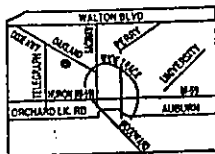
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garden spot

They have it made in shade



MARTY FIGLEY

Just as we are concerned about the amount of light our plants receive outdoors, we need to keep those same requirements in mind when we grow them indoors. Perhaps many of us put a plant in a sunny room some time ago only to discover that now it isn't doing as well in that location.

The reason may be lack of light. Shrubs and trees mature faster than we think and a taller and broader outdoor plant may be robbing our room of sunlight. I believe a grow-light would look rather ridiculous in an otherwise well-furnished room; the result would be a healthy plant but quite an eyesore! Another way to solve the problem is to put the plant where a grow-light would be acceptable, and then bring the plant into the room for esthetic purposes. That really sounds like a lot of fussing to me.

Success story

With that in mind, shade tolerant house plants can be the solution. Let me share a success story with you about my

common rubber tree plant that has resided in a low-light area for quite some time. As the song says, "We've got high hopes, high hopes, high apple-pie-in-the-sky hopes ... OOPS! there goes another rubber tree plant." This one could reach 10 feet!

I didn't know what I bought until I did some research. The *Ficus elastica*, a native of Northern India, was to be a gift for a friend in Chicago several years ago; a snowstorm prevented the trip and we still haven't made it. Now it has become a member of the household.

I repotted the small rubber plant in an all-purpose, well-draining potting soil in a pretty Planterra pot and set it on a table that had an eastern exposure. The curtain is always closed.

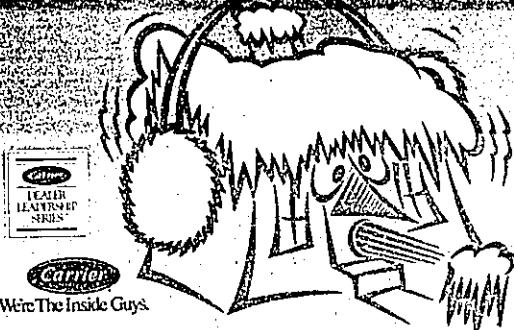
After some time I set it in a bathroom window that is covered with a mini-blind. My instincts were right, as these plants generally like three to four hours of sunlight from any direction, filtered through a curtain. The bathroom location has a northern exposure. One book I consulted advises "bright indirect sunlight for best growth" and continues, "tolerates low light."

See Figley, page G13



Long stretch:
The common rubber tree plant, *Ficus elastica*, is easy to grow. Photo by Marty Figley.

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