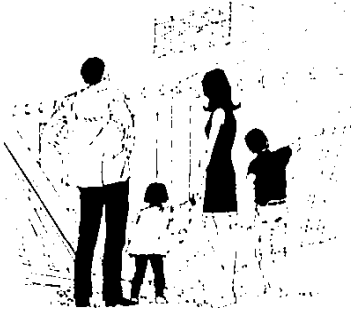


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How A Plant Can Tell If You Love Him (Her)

Do plants have feelings? Some green thumb experts say they do and that a plant shrivels up and dies if it is not loved.

There are others who contend that plants are perhaps sensitive to vibrations or some sort of emanations and have attempted to show how a plant recoils and backs away from a person it feels is hostile. A plant, they say, will droop its leaves and wilt if a person it doesn't like is in its vicinity. Have you been assaulted lately by an aggressive begonia?

Dr. Nathan Milstein, a New York City orthodontist who has made a second career selling lighting equipment and instructing people how to grow plants indoors under lights, maintains that plants respond to music and that music makes them grow better. He has produced and marketed a record called "Music to Grow Plants By" - a best seller in its field, no doubt.

In a personal interview, Dr. Milstein admitted that plants have no real musical preference, but seem to like all kinds of music, except perhaps hard or acid rock. So try a little Bach or Beatles on your geraniums.

Crazy as it seems, house plants really do seem to grow better if you give them a little special attention and tender loving care. So sing to them a little or just whisper sweetly to them. Perhaps it's just the extra carbon dioxide you exhale on them at close range. Scientists say that extra amounts of carbon dioxide stimulate plant growth. Or it may be LOVE.

Blue Potatoes, Purple Beans, Pink Bananas

Are you tired of growing the same old petunias and tomatoes? Is gardening a bore? Well, it's time to try something different -- and life will never be the same again for you or your friends.

For a start, try blue potatoes, purple green beans, black or yellow radishes, pink squash, golden beets, or white tomatoes. Yes, there really are such things.

Blue potatoes, with deep blue skin and tinted flesh, are amazing looking but are reported to taste good baked or boiled. Please pass the blue potato salad!

The "Royalty Purple" green beans are stringless snap beans with bright purple pods that turn dark green when they are cooked.

The pink squash is "Jumbo Pink Banana," with elongated squashes that weigh more than 10 pounds. They are a winter squash with smooth pink skin and orange-yellow flesh.

These psychedelic vegetables, and black, white or yellow radishes are listed in the current catalog of the Gurney Seed Co. (Yankton, S.D.). The golden beets are a specialty of Burpee Seed Co. (Philadelphia).

How about growing a birdhouse or a lampbase. There are gourds that are just the right shape and size. Also, the luffa gourd has fibrous insides that make a perfect substitute for a sponge or a washcloth.

Or grow your own spaghetti. There's a squash, known as vegetable spaghetti, with stringy pulp that makes a good stand-in for pasta when it is boiled. Sorry, it doesn't come with meat balls.

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