Peperomias are having their much-deserved time in the sun, though they have been sold as houseplants since the 1930s. For decades, there were only a handful of varieties to choose from, but with their new popularity and ease of growth, many additional varieties have come to market. The many types of peperomias can range from bushy to trailing, upright or cascading, and from fleshy succulent plants to those less so.

Many peperomias survive in nature as epiphytes or lithophytes, meaning they grow on other living and non-living things. Because they grow mostly in the understory in the tropics, they don’t need bright light, making them perfect houseplants. Peperomias never want to be in full sun, though the plants with thick fleshy leaves will need more light than the thinner leaved, less succulent varieties so keep this in mind when siting your plant.
**Different Types**

Peperomias are a diverse group of plants in the pepper family, Piperaceae, but not the edible pepper family that gives us green and hot peppers. The peperomias come from the pepper family that provides us the pepper spice that gives our food flavor. It would seem then that peperomias might be edible, but they are not for human or pet consumption.

You can choose from many varieties including bushy types as well as trailing varieties. None of the peperomias get overly large, so they are a nice choice for small spaces.

- The succulent variety *P. obtusifolia* is easy to grow as it is not the high light lover that most succulents are. It thrives in a medium light and is forgiving of drying out because of its succulence. Its adaptability makes this peperomia a winner all around and it comes in a variegated form as well.
- *P. argyreia* is also called the watermelon peperomia as its leaves resemble a watermelon’s rind.
- *Peperomia caperata* or emerald ripple is also a popular form with its deeply quilted, crinkly leaves.
- You might not guess that *P. incana* is a peperomia because it is a silver-leaved, fuzzy form that does prefer more sun and tolerates drying out more than the others.
- *Peperomia polybotrya* or raindrop peperomia is often mixed up with the more well-known *Pilea peperomioides* (friendship plant). It is more succulent, more tolerant of drying out, and does not have perfectly round leaves as the pilea has.
- Two trailing forms are *P. puteolata* or parallel peperomia and *P. pereskiifolia*. Both are easy to grow and make lovely hanging baskets.
- A resemblance to miniature turtle shells makes the string of turtles or *P. prostrata* popular and it is easy to find.

If you aren’t sure if you are looking at a peperomia, their “rat-tail” inflorescence (group or cluster of flowers) helps with recognition if they are blooming. The pale, thin, textured inflorescence does resemble a rat’s tail and if the plant is receiving enough light, you will witness its flowers. However, peperomia are not grown for the flowers, but for their amazing foliage.
Care

The care of peperomias depends on the variety you choose to grow. All of them are a bit succulent, either in their stems or leaves. The truly succulent types, such as P. incana and P. obtusifolia need to be treated as such. Wait until the potting medium is almost completely dry before watering again.

The less succulent types including P. argyreia, P. caperata, and P. polybotrya, tread a fine line of wanting to dry out but also not wanting to be kept too wet. Check your plant frequently, using your finger to test the moisture, and water when the medium is dry a couple of inches down into the container. A peperomia that is too wet will send you the message loud and clear by dropping its leaves because its stems have become mushy at the base. If yellow leaves appear that may be an indicator that you have kept it too moist. You may be able to save it by allowing it to dry out if you notice the yellow leaves soon enough.

Clay pots will work better for the peperomia family as they allow water to escape through the porous pot sides. Some of these Central and South American natives grow as epiphytes which indicates they don’t have extensive root systems. Keep them in a snug pot in a fast-draining potting medium for best results. After purchasing a commercial potting medium, add a good amount of perlite and/or orchid bark to the mix. This will allow the water to drain quickly but it will retain enough moisture for the plant to thrive.

Peperomias in general don’t need a high light situation, including the more succulent varieties. However, if you have a variegated form, the variegation will stay brighter in a higher light situation.

If you watch the watering routine closely, keep your plant warm (above 50 degrees), and give it a medium to bright light, you should have a healthy, thriving peperomia in your plant collection. Once you have one peperomia, the need to have more varieties will come naturally. It is a great group of plants!