

Dieffenbachia Plants

By
Scott Hininger
University of Wyoming Extension
Sheridan County

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There are many varieties of “dumbcane” on the market, ranging from some small almost dwarf type varieties to the large *varieties*. Dieffenbachia’s can be grown for years indoors where they can reach a height of 4 to 5 feet. The plant earned the name “dumb cane” from its toxic sap, which can cause a temporary inability to speak if ingested.

The Dieffenbachia plant does well indoors, thriving with year round room temperatures averaging 65-75 degrees. The dumbcane is not like temperatures to drop below 60 degrees. The plant cannot handle full sun but does appreciate good lighting, like you would find in a kitchen. However indirect light is fine most of the time.

Being from the aroid family we know dieffenbachia likes humidity and during the summer lots of water. Soil stays moist but not wet. During the winter season watering should be reduced. During March through October feed every other week when watering using a complete liquid food. During the winter months use NO fertilizer and water only.

Dieffenbachia prefers a well-drained soil, use 2 parts peat moss and 1 part perlite. A large plant like “Tropic Snow” capable of reaching 4-5 feet can be grown and live in a relatively small pot. The problem is usually not pot size but plant size making the plant top heavy.

For top heavy plants use a cachepot to stabilize the top heavy plant
When potting or repotting plants, springtime is best just before the growing season begins. Do not overpot!

Most propagation of Dieffenbachia is done when the plant gets too big and the plant becomes leggy. The topshoot can be cut off, and rooted by placing the “cutting” in a pot with moist well-draining soil – (50% peat moss & 50% perlite). Stems or canes of Dieffenbachia can be rooted as well. Stems must have an “eye” from which new leaves and stems will emerge. Place stem cuttings on their side, with about 1/2 the stem buried in the soil with the “eye” pointing upwards.

There are many varieties of Dieffenbachia on the market. One of the most widely known varieties is Dieffenbachia “Tropic Snow”, others are “Compacta”, “Splash”, “Topic Honey” and many others. Dieffenbachia leaves and stems are poisonous if eaten, therefore keep these foliage plants out of the reach of children and pets. These plants if not overwatered are

quite resilient, and do well in most every part of the house and can be a nice focal point. I have inherited some cuttings from my mother and between her and myself we have over 40 years of enjoyment from one of these plants, which I continue to cut and replant every 5 years or so. They rarely are bothered by insects or disease. So if you are looking for a house plant, consider one of these.

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