



Lucky Bamboo Care

Dracaena sanderana



The Chinese say that Lucky Bamboo will bring good fortune to your home or business. In Asia, it is given as a gift to those starting a new business, or to someone moving into a new home, or to anyone at any time of celebration. Since Lucky Bamboo requires no natural light it is especially nice in a home or office; in an area where no other plants can grow. It is very easy to grow and will live for many years. It is considered lucky because of its peaceful vitality and its strong growth habits.

Unlike its name, Lucky Bamboo is not really a bamboo at all; it just looks like bamboo. Lucky bamboo is actually a dracaena, (*Dracaena sanderana*). Lucky bamboo is a stick that will grow only a few inches of roots and sprouts. It will not grow branches or produce new shoots.

Curls. Many lucky bamboo stocks have fancy curls or waves. They do not grow that way naturally. Growers lay the stalks on a table in a greenhouse. They cover three sides to keep them dark. One side receives bright light. The plant naturally grows toward the light and then the grower rotates the stalk to make it curl. It can take as long as a year to produce a complete curl.

Care. Keep your Lucky Bamboo in 1"-3" of water, just enough to cover the roots. There is no need to transplant it into soil. This is not a winter hardy plant, so it will not survive if you plant it outside in the garden. Add water to the container as needed and wash out the container regularly, at least once a month. Keep your lucky bamboo in temperatures from 45 to 90 degrees Fahrenheit.

Water. Lucky Bamboo does not like chlorine so either use distilled water or let the water sit for at least 24 hours before adding it to your plant. Be sure to change the water about every two weeks so the water does not become stagnant. An easy way to change the water, without taking it out of the container, is to stand the pot (with the plant) in a sink and pour water into the container until all the old water is completely flushed out. Wash all the leaves and stalks of your lucky bamboo once every month or two to help remove any troublesome spidermites that might find a home on your plant.

Fertilizer. Fertilizer is not necessary to keep your Lucky Bamboo alive. However, it does help to add a drop or two of fertilizer to the water once every two or three months,



especially if you are trying to force the leaves to grow faster.

Light. Lucky Bamboo does not need natural light. In fact, it prefers to be out of direct sun. The low-light conditions in an office are great for Lucky Bamboo.

The main stalks of the Lucky Bamboo will not grow any longer than they are, but they can get thicker over time. The leaves on the top of the stock will grow upwards. The more area the roots have to grow (the bigger the container), the faster and longer the leaves will grow, but the main stock will always remain the same length. The leaves can eventually form stems of their own. To keep the bamboo from growing too large, you can gently break these leaf stems from the main stem.

If you want to start a new plant put these leaf stems in water. The leaf stems may start to root and form new plants. Let the new leaf stems grow as tall as you like, then cut off the tops of the stems to control their height.

Ancient Chinese traditions indicate that the number of lucky bamboo stalks in a container have different meanings and bring different beneficial factors into your life. The number's meaning is associated with it's own sound and 3 stalks become bearers of FU (happiness) LU (wealth) SOH (Longevity).

Three Stalks: Bring happiness, wealth and longevity.

Five stalks: Represents the five different parts of life from which wealth spurs from.

Six stalks: Bring prosperity and favorable conditions.

Seven stalks: Good health.

Eight stalks: Grow and thrive.

Ten stalks: Complete and perfect.

Twentyone stalks: Offers a very powerful, all-purpose blessing.

Everyone loves to receive good luck and beautiful decorations for their home or office. Lucky bamboo is the perfect gift, it represents good luck and it is extremely easy to care for. Give one to your friends and neighbors.



Tips for Growing Lucky Bamboo

1. Plant your bamboo in a glass or ceramic container. The size of the container depends on the size of the plant because lucky bamboo is available from a few inches tall and can grow up to 10 feet. The plant size should be proportionate to the pot and not so top heavy that it can be tipped over easily.



2. Fill the pot with fresh, distilled or bottled water. Plants are sensitive to chlorine and fluoride. If you use tap water, allow it to sit overnight so the chlorine can evaporate before using it on the plant. Change the water every two or three weeks, and ensure that there is always at least 1 inch of water in the container or vase.

When leaves turn yellow due to excessive direct sunlight or the presence of fluoride in the water, they need to be trimmed off so that foliage continues to sprout. Removing affected leaves will encourage new growth.

3. Place enough pebbles in the vase or container to hold the stems upright. Use any type of pebbles or stones you want. Remove the bamboo and rocks from the container about once a month to rinse any residue from the container, rocks and roots.

4. Place the lucky bamboo plant in an area that gets bright, indirect sunlight with temperatures between 60 and 70 degrees Fahrenheit. The plant will survive in areas with less light, but it will grow more slowly. Avoid intense, bright light, which may damage the plant.

5. Lucky bamboo requires little fertilizer -- or none -- to thrive, and it can potentially damage the plant if it is given too much. Dilute liquid fertilizer to 10 percent if you choose to feed it.



6. Rinse off the plant under cool running water if you notice aphids or spider mites. This should remove them without causing stress or damage to the plant. Aphids appear as small, pear-shaped, soft-bodied insects of varying color. Spider mites are tiny, vary in color and often produce webbing on plants. Lucky bamboo can also be infected by mealybugs, thrips or scale.

In severe cases, soak the lucky bamboo stalk in a solution of insecticidal soap in a bowl of water. Wash and rinse the container, and rinse the stalk thoroughly before replacing it in fresh water. You can also spray it lightly with the soap solution, and wipe the stalk with a soft, damp cloth.

