

7 types

of resilient plants
perfect for urban homes



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THE
CONCRETE
GARDEN
CITY



Due to the rising popularity of gardening as a hobby in Singapore, many have tried their hands on adding a little color to spice up their living and working spaces. Where some have succeeded in creating lush and vibrant gardenscapes that have their own mini eco-systems in their home, others may experience the opposite due to constraints in space, knowledge and time to care for their plants or simply lacking 'green thumbs'. The good news is, nurturing your very own Instagram-worthy indoor garden is straightforward minus the hassle. We've compiled a list of flowers and plants for beginners that are as resilient as you are in these trying times which are easy to care for and will definitely enhance your homes and offices. Let us cast away your seeds of doubt.



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Flowers

1. Orchids *Ease of care rating 4 out of 5*

Perhaps one of the largest of all plant families, orchids or Orchidaceae can be easily identified by their characteristic such as their unique bilateral symmetry of flowers, with upward-facing petals. While there are many native orchids in all regions of the world, those commonly grown by home gardeners tend to be tropical orchids kept as houseplants. Orchids are also known as the national plant of Singapore chosen for its resilience and vibrant colors meant as a reflection of the Singaporean spirit. Here are some recommendations of orchid species to consider keeping:

Moth Orchids (Phalaenopsis Orchids)



Moth Orchids can bloom all year round with over 50 species and hundreds of hybrids each with their own exciting colors to choose from. This species of orchid is one of the most popular plants to grow among beginners as they require minimal conditions to thrive and need only little effort to care for, perfect for brightening your home interiors and setting a pleasant ambiance.

Sunlight - Brightly shaded areas with diffused natural sunlight. Avoid direct sun exposure.

Water - Moth orchids thrive in high humidity conditions. Misting the leaves with water is sufficient for its growth. Avoid watering directly into the soil or crown of the plant.

Soil - Orchid potting mixes are generally ideal for these plants. A good mixture should drain well and would usually contain fir bark, perlite, and peat moss. Other combinations are also available. Replace once every 2 years.

Potting - Consider pots that have good drainage to keep soil lightly damp without being soggy.

***Arktivate/Fertilizer** - For that perfect bloom, consider using fertilizers once every two weeks.

Boat Orchids (Cymbidium Orchids)



Compared to some orchid varieties, Boat orchids have smaller flowers that have a patterned lip and is commonly used in flower displays and even worn as beautiful corsages. Their multiple flower spikes ensure a satisfying display in any corner you house them in. While the plant itself can live long, its flowers typically last between 8-10 weeks and blooms only once. However, prolonging its lifespan and bloom is possible with the proper conditions.

Sunlight - Boat orchids prefer semi-shaded areas that are warm. Avoid direct sun exposure.

Water - Boat orchids require more water frequently to help it maintain its growth and sustain its bloom.

Soil - A commercial paphiopedilum orchid mix is sufficient for these plants. Alternatively, a rich, loose organic mixture such as a combination of peat moss, fir bark and perlite is recommended.

Potting - A water retentive pot is recommended when nurturing for Boat orchids.

***Arktivate/Fertilizer** - Fertilizing a Boat orchid once every two weeks is sufficient for it to preserve that healthy bloom.



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Nobile orchids (Dendrobium Nobile)



Widely known for their profuse blooms and delicately scented flowers that come in a variety of pastel tones, Dendrobiums are a symbol of pure affection and can mean love between couples as well as friends and colleagues. These plants can have up to 50 blooms on one stem, each bloom lasting around 4 weeks and make for a stunning floral display.

Sunlight – Nobile orchids require as much light as possible to thrive without exposing it to direct sunlight.

Water – Consider watering Nobile orchids lightly and allow for liquids to evaporate with light and ventilation to reduce the risk of fungal growth and infections.

Soil – A commercial orchid potting medium, which generally contains peat moss, perlite, or fir bark is recommended and can be easily replicated. Make sure the medium has aeration and is well-draining, so the roots aren't left in too much moisture for a lengthy period of time.

Potting – Nobile orchids prefer smaller pots for their roots to crowd in with plenty of drainage holes for excess water to leak from and ventilation for soil mediums to dry.

***Arktivate/Fertilizer** - Nobile orchids require light fertilizing once every two weeks to maintain its growth.

2. Bromeliad Guzmania *Ease of care rating 4.5 out of 5*



The Guzmania is one of the more popular species among the variety of some 2500 types of Bromeliads that thrive in tropical climates, which makes them ideal for Singaporean homes. Depending on their species, Guzmanias grow unique flower bracts that stem from the centre of the plant and bloom with exciting bright colors such as red, burgundy, yellow, or orange and can remain vivid for up to 6-10 weeks with minimal care. You may also propagate multiple types of Guzmanias from cuttings of other types of Guzmanias to customize your own plants.

Sunlight – Guzmanias are highly adaptable to their surroundings. You may observe your Bromeliad's leaves as they give clear indication of their need of light. If your plant has thin, green leaves, low light is sufficient. If your plant's leaves are grey and thick, a moderate light level is required. Do note that leaves can become dull and pale when there is too much light.

Water – Guzmanias are drought resistant and they are able to survive with minimal watering. These Bromeliads prefer being misted on their leaves rather than having their soil wet. Avoid overwatering.

Soil – A light, well-aerated soil which is fast-draining is highly recommended. Perlite or sand can be added if the soil seems heavy.

Potting – Guzmanias need very little real estate. However, keep in mind to find heftier small pots as Guzmanias are general heavier topside and may topple easily. It is also recommended to use loose dry soil or well-aerated fast draining soil to cater for their small roots.

***Arktivate/Fertilizer** - Light misting of liquid fertilizer on the leaves is actually recommended when caring for a Guzmania. Avoid inserting fertilizer into the central cup of the Bromeliad.



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3. Peace Lily *Ease of care rating 4.5 out of 5*



Often associated with purity, innocence and prosperity, Peace lilies can be easily distinguished by their white flowers that resemble anthuriums and large dark and glossy green leaves. These plants can achieve their blooms even in medium to low light conditions as they are commonly found growing close to forest floors in tropical forests around the world. Peace lilies are also an auspicious feng shui plant that symbolizes good luck and harmony and is listed by NASA as one of the best plants to assist with cleaning the air of harmful toxins such as carbon monoxide and benzene to name a few. It is also recommended to keep Peace lilies out of reach from young children and pets as it is considered poisonous and may lead to unwanted health issues when consumed.

Sunlight – Peace lilies can thrive in low lit areas of your home. Consider placing in places with indirect sunlight. However, too much sunlight may cause leaves to fade and may potentially burn them.

Water – Moderate watering is required to main the plant's growth. Allow for the top of the soil to dry out before adding more water. Avoid over-watering.

Soil – A rich, well-aerated organic potting soil with a good amount of peat is ideal for Peace lilies to grow.

Potting – A standard pot with drip holes is sufficient to house Peace lilies. No special pots required.

✳Arktivate/Fertilizer - Peace lilies require minimal fertilizing within a month to promote a healthy growth.



"Peace lilies are also an auspicious feng shui plant that symbolizes good luck and harmony."



Plants

4. Dracaenas *Ease of caring rating 4.5 out of 5*

The name for this plant species derives from an ancient Greek name Drakaina meaning female dragon thus, they are also called dragon plants due to its red gum-like resin also known as Dragon's blood that was used as toothpaste, dyes and even medicine over centuries ago and is still used today as varnish and photoengraving. These plants are able to withstand certain amounts of neglect and can still grow with minimal care. Dracaenas are tropical plants and shrubs that are ideal as house plants as they vary in size and characteristics to suit the homeowner. While some types of Dracaenas grow upright woody stems and long pointed lanceolate arching leaves which may resemble small indoor trees, other more compact species can be utilized to decorate shelves and tabletops. Additionally, NASA has discovered that Dracaenas are capable of filtering and purifying its environment of harmful oxides and pollutants such benzene, formaldehyde, and xylene in the air. Here are some types of Dracaenas for your consideration:

Snake Plant (*Dracaena (syn. sansevieria) trifasciata*)



Commonly known by its other names such as Mother-in-Law Tongue, Saint George's sword, tiger's tail and viper's bowstring hemp among some, this Dracaena species are excellent for beginners who are starting out at growing their own garden or would like to occupy empty spaces in their homes. Snake plants are durable diehard plants that are easy to grow and hard to kill as they are able to tolerate very low-lit areas. They are also able to survive extended periods of time in the absence of water as they are able to store water in their leaves. Be sure to wipe its leaves often with a damp cloth to help clear its pores that help filter out harmful pollutants in the air.

Sunlight – While it is mentioned that Snake plants can tolerate low lit areas, they grow better in brighter conditions except in direct sunlight. Snake plants can also be kept under filtered light if preferred.

Water – Snake plants are able to store water in their leaves which allows them to survive extended periods of time in the absence of water. Light watering is sufficient. Ensure that soil is dry before watering and do not over water and cause the soil to become soggy as this will cause the roots to rot easily.

Soil – A soilless potting mixture works best to ensure sufficient drainage for Snake plants as they can easily suffer from root rot due to overwatering or excess moisture in its roots.

Potting – Small terracotta pots are highly recommended as they do not trap excess moisture and water. The size of pots should complement the size of the snake plant.

***Arktivate/Fertilizer** - Snake plants require little to no fertilizer to help with their growth since they are light feeders. If you prefer to do so, you may apply a small dosage once every 2-3months.



Lucky Bamboo Plant (*Dracaena (syn. Sanderiana) Braunii*)



The most notable of the *Dracaena* family, the Lucky Bamboo Plant has gained massive appeal due to its ability to intertwine eastern mysticism with western new age culture due to its many intricate forms and shapes. Despite its name, this plant is not a member of the bamboo species rather, from the bamboo-like stems that grow upright and straight. Many people believe that the Lucky Bamboo Plant bring good luck, wealth and fortune and can enhance the chi or energy of their surroundings. It is also known in Feng Shui that the number of stalks you keep carries its own meaning similar to the gifting of roses. This tolerant plant is another great recommendation for beginners or those who are afraid that they have 'Brown thumbs' since they require little to grow.

Sunlight – While it is mentioned that Snake plants can tolerate low lit areas, they grow better in brighter conditions except in direct sunlight. Snake plants can also be kept under filtered light if preferred.

Water – Depending on the type of Lucky Bamboo you have, you can either grow it in soil or in water. Maintain at least 5cm (2 inches) of distilled or filtered water in a pot or vase or for soil mediums, lightly sprinkle some water to the soil twice a week. In cases of low humidity, lightly spray leaves of the plant to avoid it turning brown.

Soil – A commercial potting soil is perfect and sufficient in housing this plants.

Potting – Pots or vases can be used depending on the medium of choice for your plant. It is advised to add pebbles to stabilize the stems and hold them in place.

✳Arktivate/Fertilizer - Lucky bamboo plants do not require any fertilizer assistance for their growth. If you prefer, it is recommended to only apply a small dosage once every 2-3months..

Mass Cane (*Dracaena Fragrans "Massageana"*)



Mass canes are commonly known as Cornstalk or Corn plant due its resemblance to the crop as it features thick stems draped with long, broad, and glossy green leaves with a yellow streak running down the center. Mass canes will occasionally bloom with sprays of small, white flowers which are considered "lucky" to some as conditions for this to occur may be hard to replicate. They are also considered relatively low-maintenance plants that grow well in more tropical climates due to their minimal requirement for sunlight and water. An important consideration when choosing to keep Mass canes are that they prefer warmer environments as they don't do well with colder climates and that they are slow-growing and slow reacting plants, which mean that when they show symptoms of overwatering or underwatering, the damage will already have occurred.

Sunlight – For optimal growth, Mass canes only require moderately bright spaces to grow healthily. While they can tolerate a wide variety of indoor light conditions, it is ideal for them to kept in places with indirect sunlight.

Water – Allow for soil surface to be dry before watering Mass canes. Light watering is sufficient to aid with its growth, preferably once per week or two. Adjust watering periods to either increase or decrease intervals of watering according to the light conditions of your home.

Soil – This *Dracaena* can be grown in medium consisting of lava rock mixed with soil. Alternatively, a loose, well-aerated and fast-draining soil is ideal.

Potting – A regular pot or planter that has drainage holes for excess water is also advisable for Mass cane care.

✳Arktivate/Fertilizer – Mass canes do not require any additional nutrients via fertilizing as it may cause leaves to brown due to an imbalance of nutrients such as excess baron or fluoride. However, if you must use fertilizers, it is recommended in small doses ideally once a year.



5. Succulents *Ease of caring rating 4 out of 5*

Popular succulent plants come in a variety of exciting sizes (usually fit in the palm of your hands), leaf shapes and colors, flowers, and unique features. These plants are native to seasonally arid climates with scarce water sources such as deserts, mountainsides, or high limbs of tropical jungle trees. Due to this, Succulents have developed fleshy leaves or stems capable of storing moisture. Aside from the occasional watering, succulents are generally resilient species and can grow easily with minimal care. An important point of consideration in keeping and caring for these types of plants would be that most succulents have fragile, shallow roots that are easily damaged. Therefore, some level of sensitivity and patience must be applied when handling during propagation or transferring into other mediums or pots. Some ideal types of Succulents to consider are:



Zebra Plant (Haworthia Fasciata)

Zebra plants are a delicate species of Succulents that grow up to 5 to 8-inches only in height. They are small and have thick, dark green leaves that gives off an interesting Zebra pattern, with bumps of white tubercles on the outer surface. These plants are related to Aloe plants which are in the same sub-family, hence, the similarity in appearance of shape. Zebra plants have acclimated to receive lots of sunlight and little water due to their sub-tropical natural habitats, which explains their ability to store water in their leaves. Haworthia Fasciatas are not to be confused with Haworthia attenuate, another species of the same name, which may look similar but with one key difference: H. Fasciatas have smoother inner leaves compared to H. Attenuatas that display tubercles that are bumpy characteristics. Either way, both species are viable as an excellent plant for beginners to keep in their homes.



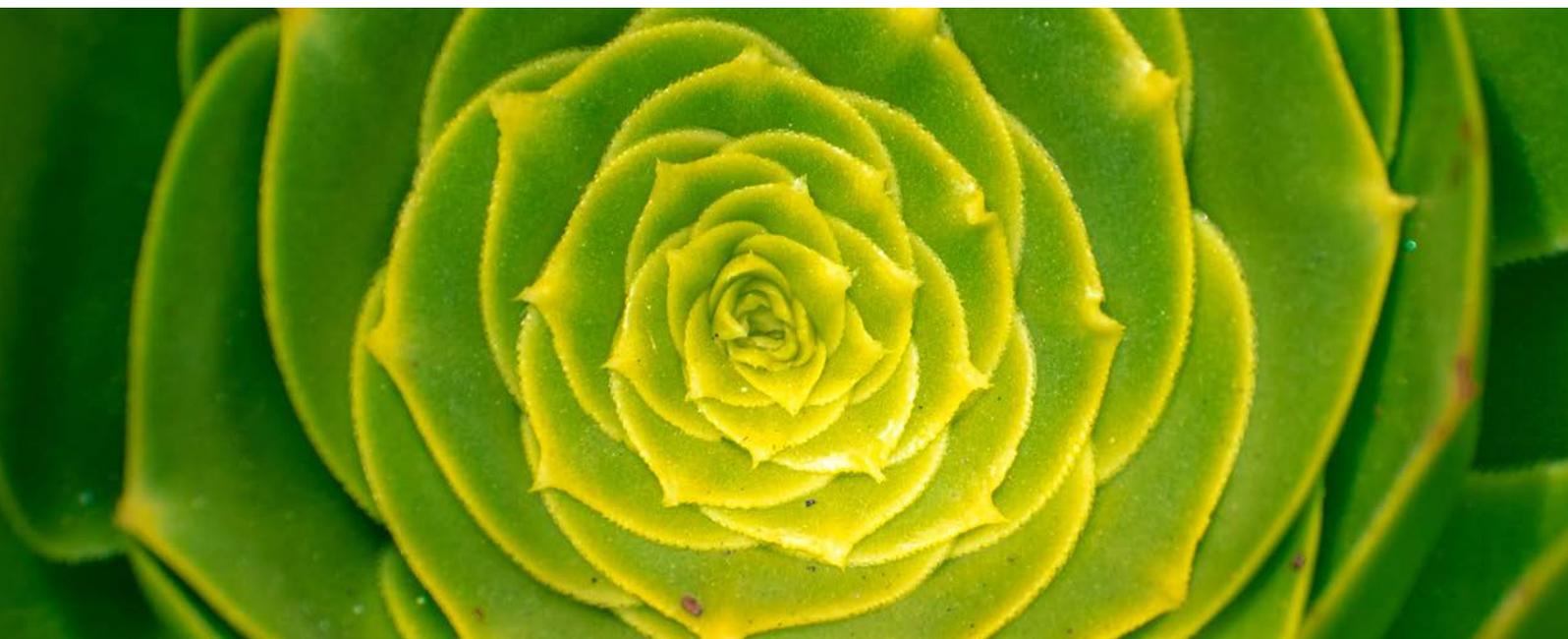
Sunlight – It is advised to keep Zebra plants under bright, filtered light between 4-6hours per day instead of leaving them in direct sunlight. However, they are also able to survive under poor lighting conditions for quite some time.

Water – During the earlier stages of its growth, thoroughly watering a Zebra plant is recommended in proportion to the amount of soil it is planted in to avoid overwatering. Before the next watering cycle, ensure that soil is dry to the touch.

Soil – Utilization of potting mix for succulents would be sufficient. Soil needs to be loose and well-aerated to allow air to reach its small roots. Using sand and perlite mixture is another good alternative.

Potting – A typical miniature pot with drainage holes is sufficient to help the soil dry faster after watering to avoid excess water from collecting and allow air to reach the roots.

✦Arktivate/Fertilizer – Fertilizers can be utilized in the growing stages of Zebra plants, ideally applied in small doses once every 2 weeks.



Aloe Vera



The aloe vera plant is an easy, attractive succulent that makes for a great indoor companion. Aloe veras are widely known for their use in relieving pains such as scrapes and minor burns when applied topically thus being dubbed as a “Medicinal Plant”. It is a popular ingredient in many skin care products due to its hydration capabilities thanks to its sap and flesh from within their leaves which contain anti-septic qualities with can help fight against certain bacteria, fungi and diseases and should only be applied externally and avoid being ingested. Aloe veras are typically stemless or have noticeably short stems which are thick with its signature serrated fleshy leaves that fan out from the plant’s central stem.

Sunlight – It is recommended to keep Aloe veras from direct sunlight to avoid drying it out. Bright indirect light is appropriate for easy care.

Water – Aloe veras require watering twice a week.

Soil – Aloe veras can grow in any type of soil. The best medium is using a well aerated soil mixed with sand that is fast draining. Otherwise, a commercial cactus potting soil works well.

Potting – A standard small pot with drip holes is sufficient to allow for quick drying of soil to prevent root rot.

***Arkivate/Fertilizer** – Aloe veras appreciate light fertilizing applied in small doses once a month for optimal care.



*“Money do not grow on tree,
however they do grow on plants”*

6. Money Plants (*Epipremnum Aureum*) *Ease of caring rating 4.5 out of 5*

Money plants are a common houseplant in temperate, tropical, and sub-tropical regions of the world like Australia, South Asia, and Southeast Asia and are believed to be effective in attracting wealth, prosperity and enhancing good luck. The five leaves on each branch of the plant are said to represent the five elements of Nature which are Fire, Water, Air, Metals, and Wood. Further symbolic meaning in keeping Money plants is associated with growth, flexibility, and kindness. Money plants are generally easy to care for and require little maintenance, ideal for beginners to add some color in their living spaces. Various recommendations of different types of Money plants include:

Golden Pothos (*Epipremnum Aureum*)



Also bearing similar scientific names as the former, Golden pothos are arguably one of the easiest plants to grow that can thrive on low light conditions. These plants have purifying capabilities to rid the surrounding environment of harmful toxins such as formaldehyde, benzene and carbon monoxide while also helping eliminate odors. They are also known to assist in alleviating eye irritation due to extended screen use during work. They are able to enjoy a wide range of environments and act as excellent ornamental plants to make living spaces more vibrant. A key consideration when keeping a Golden pothos is to ensure that the plant is not within the reach of pets and young children to avoid being poisoned.

Sunlight – It is important to note that the variegation may start to fade under intense lighting conditions. Therefore, low to mid lighting conditions are usually recommended.

Water – Golden pothos do not tolerate excess moisture in its roots, therefore a light spray on its leaves is sufficient when watering them.

Soil – A standard commercial potting mix is sufficient for this plant.

Potting – Ensure that the planting pot to house this plant have plenty of holes to maximize drainage of excess moisture.

***Arktivate/Fertilizer** – Fertilizing a Golden pothos is not required. If you prefer, a small dose once every 2 months is more than enough.

Swiss Cheese Plant (*Monstera deliciosa*)



The Swiss cheese plant gets its name from its large, heart-shaped leaves which, develop holes as the plant ages known as "fenestration", making its leaves resemble Swiss cheese. These plants are extremely easy to care for and have the ability to 'climb' nearby structures in your living space. By providing it with a stake, moss stick, or trellis, it can then cling on to them, leading to some beautiful displays and potentially produce even larger leaves. Swiss Cheese plants usually develop quickly and can reach expansive heights in just under 6 months. General maintenance such as light brushing of leaves with a damp cloth is advised to sustain its glossy look.

Sunlight – Bright light with no direct sun is recommended. If the leaves of maturing plants grow without slits or holes, it is recommended to give them more light.

Water – Water thoroughly twice weekly and allow for the top inch of soil to dry out before applying more water.

Soil – A 1:1 ratio of one part sand or perlite with one part peat moss based mix is a good medium for this plant as it provides good drainage.

Potting – A standard pot with good drainage is ideal for this plant.

***Arktivate/Fertilizer** – A liquid fertilizer is highly recommended when caring for this plant. Lightly mist the plant once every 2 weeks.



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7. Air Plants *Ease of care rating 5 out of 5*

There are hundreds of species and varieties of air plants. They usually have strap-shape or slender triangle-shape leaves that grow in a rosette pattern with new growth appearing from the center and most species produce attractive, tubular, or funnel-shaped flowers. Those with silver foliage tend to be the most drought-tolerant; greener types have been known to dry out faster. Air plants are unique as they require no soil mediums to grow, yet they are able to grow normally as any other houseplants without the hassle of needing to be potted.

Tillandsia Abdita (Tillandsia brachycaulos x abdita)



The Tillandsia abditas are a beautiful variant of the popular brachycaulous air plant which have velvety soft leaves that are dense green in color and grows upwards and outwards and may turn a lovely shade of red or purple as it matures.

Sunlight – For air plants such as this, fluorescent or tabletop lights is sufficient to provide enough light for it to grow.

Water – Due to its unique structure, Tillandsia abditas can be left to soak in a basin/bowl for 20 minutes once a week. It is recommended to place them on a towel to dry them off to remove excess water before putting them back on display. Alternatively, moderate misting can also be recommended.

Potting – Not required.

***Arktivate/Fertilizer** – Fertilizing air plants are neither difficult nor necessary. If preferred, once every quarterly is enough.

Ionantha Guatemala



Ionantha Guatemalas are normally green in color but turn an amazing red or pink color when they come into bloom, 2-3 times a year, which then produces purple flowers that protrude out from the center of the plant.

Ionantha Guatemalas have thin spiky leaves with many trichomes that give the leaves a silvery look.

Sunlight – Indirect sunlight works well for Ionantha Guatemalas. Alternatively, using a fluorescent or tabletop light is sufficient to provide enough light for it to grow.

Water – Soaking of this air plant in a basin/bowl for 20 minutes once a week is sufficient. It is recommended to place them on a towel to dry them off to remove excess water before putting them back on display. Alternatively, moderate misting can also be recommended.

Potting – Not required.

***Arktivate/Fertilizer** – Fertilizers can be used to enhance the look of Ionantha Guatemalas. For lush looking plants, consider misting lightly with liquid fertilizers once a month.



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*"An artistic expression
of nature in an urban setting."*



What is Arktivate?

Arktivate is a product developed and manufactured in Singapore owned by Bio Ark Pte Ltd which is a bio-organic medium that acts similarly to fertilizers as it provides essential nutrients to plants in supporting and maximizing its growth. Arktivate comes in two separate forms, solid or liquid, and contains a living ecosystem of microorganisms known as beneficial microbes that provides for 100% of plant needs. Additionally, being a bio-organic product, Arktivate is specially created using organic raw materials without the use of harmful chemicals.

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