

## Aspidistra elatior proves its en-trend by winning Favourite Office Plant of the Year 2017

This year the plant winning the crowning glory of the Favourite Office Plant of the Year is an old, old favourite coming back in vogue, the Aspidistra elatior.



A favourite of the Victorians, it withstands dark corners, changes of temperature, draughts and neglect. It was its sturdiness that earned it the alternative name of the cast iron plant.



It was up against some stiff competition, the attractive *Pilea peperomoides* also known as the Chinese money plant or the missionary plant and *Sedum morganianum* (donkey tails). It was a close call between the *Aspidistra* and the *Pilea* with only one vote between them.

The judges felt that the *Aspidistra* fulfilled the brief perfectly, being easy to maintain and useful in creating a relaxed atmosphere.

This year's panel of judges included Jim and Lisa Wilkinson at Pro Landscaper, award winning garden designer Claudia de Yong and author of the Flowerona blog, Rona Wheeldon. Two American judges, Joe Zazzera, chair of Plant Solutions in Arizona and Kathy Fediw, editor of i-Plants Magazine, both of whom are on the board of Green Plants for Green Buildings also sent in their votes.

efig ambassador Ian Drummond of Indoor Garden Design and author of *At Home with Plants* commented: "The *Aspidistra* is a strong plant which is really easy to care for, originating from Japan and Taiwan, it's a really useful office plant for darker spaces.

"Like all plants though it brings many benefits including creating a healthy space, helping to reduce stress levels and improving wellbeing and productivity."

### 2017's Top Three

*Aspidistra*



- Can tolerate shade and darker corners
- Definitely keep away from direct sunlight
- Can tolerate low temperatures in winter of 7-10°C
- Grows slowly to around 55cm
- Water well in summer but much less in winter
- Wash/spray leaves to keep free from dust

This native of Japan and Taiwan was very popular in Victorian homes, perhaps because of its tolerance for neglect and the dark Victorian houses. It gained its popular name due to this fact, Cast Iron plant.

*Pilea peperomoides*



- Likes the light but not full sun
- Water moderately
- Easy to care for
- Too tender to go outdoors in our climate
- Grows to about 15 cm tall

This uber-trendy houseplant originates from China but was brought to the west by a visiting missionary - hence one of its names - to his home in Norway.  
*Sedum morganianum*



- Loves a sunny windowsill
- Water in spring and summer but drain well
- Reduce winter watering to monthly
- Feed during the growing season

Originally from Mexico and Honduras, this succulent is pretty forgiving even if you forget to water it once or twice. Keep it in best shape by following the tips above.

