

# Expressions In Poetry

by WILLENE M. RUCKER

## THE TIDE

The blazing sun is slowly drifting behind the clouds; The still blue water at the ocean is beginning to change. The once calm winds are blowing steadily now, The mell of the salty water is more distinct to me. Maybe this time I'll see the tide come in. The sea birds are hurriedly hunting for their meals in the sand, Trying to get it before the rushing waters come in. Some of the awaiting spectators are are restless But I'm patiently waiting for the tide to come in. The children are playing ball and digging sand castles; Men of all ages are eyeing women in bathing suits. Some seem unaware that something important is about to happen. It looks like the tide is coming in. The still waters are beginning to stir I love that gentle breeze caressing my face Nature is getting ready for the change The tide is coming in.

Plants have gained tremendous popularity as decorative elements in apartments, homes and offices. Their use depends on personal taste, budget and an individual's "green thumb" abilities.

There are some excellent books available at the library, and most florist will be happy to advise you once you discuss with them the light available in your home for good growth.

Proper light for house plants can be a tricky matter. Many foliage plants cannot tolerate direct sunlight; their leaves will burn if they get too much. On the other

hand, flowering plants cacti and succulents will not bloom without enough direct sunlight.

If you live in a city apartment where natural light is not plentiful, both fluorescent and special lights are often adequate. Be sure to check first with your local greenhouse.

Before buying, always check the five major requirements for a plant—light, water, soil composition, temperature and humidity. Also find out if the plant is tempered or conditioned to a life indoors. If a plant has been living out of doors, the shock of change without a period in a greenhouse will be very discouraging as leaves will yellow and fall, and you'll have to nurse it through a period of adjustment.

If you are just getting into the botanical thing, you may wonder how to decorate "tastefully" with plants. Although there are no rules as such, you want your plants to look like they "belong" in your particular decor.

Whatever the advice from friend-and-florist and your own inclinations, plants can be mixed or matched... but, if your furnishings are predominantly of the following styles, interior designers at Armstrong Cork Co.

have these suggestions.

For exotic settings, **Palms** (*Howeia forsteriana*) are easy to grow. Time was when these palms were status symbols and greatly sought after...perhaps because of their rarity and the fact that such plants could not be shipped from far-off ports successfully. Today, thanks to modern transportation and improved chemical technology, many varieties of tropical flora are widely available. Palm require relatively little light, they're reasonable, and they grow to dramatic heights that vary from 2½ to 6 feet.

**Boston Ferns** (*nephrolepis cordifolia*) are beautifully suited to elegant or traditional interiors. Big jardinières of feathery ferns add romantic touches of greenery; they "sentimentalize" a room. Ferns love high humidity and cool temperatures but should be kept away from drafts and air conditioners which take moisture out of the air. Curtains or blinds are a good idea if a fern is in front of a window. Four or five feet back from a sunlit window would be best placement.

If you're an Early American buff, **Grape Ivy** (*Cissus rhombifolia*) is perfect. It's very adaptable and can be used in the very

popular hanging baskets, in centerpieces, dry sinks, etc. Easy to grow, Grape Ivy is medium light requiring, relatively inexpensive, and varies from 2 inches to 3 feet in size.

Spanish or Mediterranean decors look more authentic with the lustrous **Corn plant** (*Dracaena*) around. Its cost is determined by the variety and the quality, and the size can vary from 10 inches to 15 feet! *Dracaena* is easy to grow because it requires low to medium light, and its water needs are moderate.

One of the newer decorating trends is a revival of the Art Deco, and on of the plants that looks appropriate with Deco is *Diffenbachia maculata*—or "Mother-in-law's Tongue." No green thumb is required for this conversation item—it's hard to kill! Size can vary from 4 inches to 4 feet, and it can be

kept alive for years with low light and only an occasional watering.

Modernists like the **Weeping Laurel** (*Ficus benjamina*). It, too, is relatively inexpensive, needs moderate water and average light, and its size varies from 1 foot table-plant size to the 10 foot floor-plant variety.

**Philodendrons** (*Araceae*) are undoubtedly the most versatile of house plant and seem to suit eclectic backgrounds because of their own flexibility. Except for the very exotic varieties, they are fairly inexpensive with minimal light and water needs.

Plants have a lot in common with people; they can be killed with too much food, drink, and warmth.

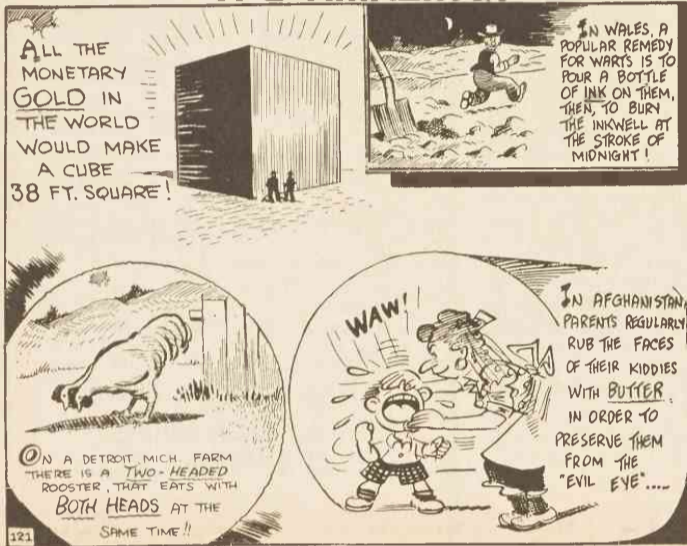
(Incidentally, energy conservation will not affect growth of most house plants which like temperatures around 68 degrees F. Most plants can prosper in

temperatures as low as 55 degrees F.)

An interesting sidelight to the popularity of house plants is the "baby-sitting" occupation that has emerged for talented "plant people" of all ages. Plant store personnel offering this service frequently guarantee that your plants not only will be in the same good condition as you left them before a trip...but in better condition when you return since they've been under the professional's care. And how about the interesting theories that music and "sweet talk" favorably affect plant growth?

There is no doubt that plants are perhaps the cheapest centerpieces you can use... far less expensive than many decorative art objects, candles, or fresh flowers... always "on hand" and "in season."

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Philodendron means "tree-lover" and was probably named so for its ability to "climb." Showy foliage characterizes this most popular of house plant. Philodendron is versatile with minimal light and water requirements so that it can be placed at various levels in a room. Here it makes interesting decorating against Armstrong's Wood Grain Plank ceiling tile.

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