

HOUSEPLANTS · INDOORS, IN BRIGHT INDIRECT LIGHT

Let's grow zz plant.

Zamioculcas zamiifolia

This plan is for **Zamioculcas zamiifolia**

Is this your plant? Choose one established ZZ plant in a draining 4-inch nursery pot. This dry-through routine is for a rooted plant; fresh leaf cuttings need their own rooting conditions.

Glossy leaves, with a longer wait between waterings.

Keep its nursery pot

1 rooted plant

Before you start

Start indoors year-round with bright indirect light. Lower light slows growth and drying; check weekly but water only after the mix is dry throughout. Keep away from pets that chew.

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Sources checked September 25, 2026 [View sources](#)



LIGHT

Bright indirect light

Bright indirect light is best. Lower light slows growth and water use; a windowless room needs suitable artificial light.



WATER

Dry all the way through

A dry surface alone does not mean the root zone is dry.



FEEDING

One spring feeding

Slow growth calls for a light feeding routine, not weekly fertilizer.



ZZ plant contains insoluble calcium oxalate crystals that irritate the mouth when chewed. Keep it out of reach of pets and young children.

BEFORE YOU START



Your little kit.

- ✓ 1 rooted ZZ plant in one draining 4-inch nursery pot
- ✓ 1 saucer or an outer pot you can empty
- ✓ A watering can and a thin wooden skewer to help check deeper moisture

THE SOIL

Keep the healthy nursery mix at first. When repotting is needed, choose a freely draining houseplant potting mix and check whether it already contains fertilizer.

Start with what's on this list. Add plant food only when the feeding section says it's needed.

YOUR SIMPLE GROWING PLAN



One pot. Here's the plan.

Indoors, in bright indirect light. Start with **small plant**.

THE POT

Keep its nursery pot

Buy one established plant in a 4-inch-wide nursery pot with drainage holes. Keep it there at first with a saucer; this is our compact starter choice, not a mature-size limit.

HOW MANY

1 rooted plant

Choose a labeled *Zamioculcas zamiifolia* with firm, healthy growth. Keep an existing healthy plant in its suitable draining pot rather than downsizing it to match this plan.

THE CONTAINER

Keep its nursery pot



No immediate repot

START WITH

1 rooted plant



Illustration · not to scale

Keep its nursery pot · 1 rooted plant Buy one established plant in a 4-inch-wide nursery pot with drainage holes. Keep it there at first with a saucer; this is our compact starter choice, not a mature-size limit. Choose a labeled *Zamioculcas zamiifolia* with firm, healthy growth. Keep an existing healthy plant in its suitable draining pot rather than downsizing it to match this plan. Original illustration; not to scale.

01 Keep the draining inner pot

Start with one established plant in its 4-inch nursery pot. Set it on a saucer or inside an outer pot and keep the drainage holes open.

02 Choose bright, indirect light

Use a spot near a window, protected from strong direct sun. Lower light is tolerated but growth slows; a room without daylight needs suitable artificial light.

03 Check weekly; water only when dry

Lift the pot and check deeper than the surface. If the mix is damp or the pot still feels heavy, leave the watering can alone.

04

Water, drain, then wait

When the mix is dry throughout, wet the root zone thoroughly and let it drain. Empty the saucer, then wait for the same dry conditions before watering again.

When it is time to repot: [check drainage](#) and [choose a container mix](#). Follow this plant's mix instructions.

Other ways to start

Separate one rooted division

At a needed repot, separate a section with its own rhizome, roots, and healthy growth. Give that section one draining pot just large enough for its roots. Keep all loose plant pieces away from pets and children. Buying an established plant avoids this extra handling for a first project.

Try one leaf cutting, with patience

Leaf cuttings can form new rhizomes, but this is a slow project. UConn reports that formation can take up to nine months in ordinary indoor conditions. Start a cutting in lightly moist, freely draining propagation mix with indirect light. The dry-through watering rule above is for an established rooted plant, not a fresh cutting trying to root.

YOUR EVERYDAY ROUTINE



Water & fertilizer at a glance.



WATER WHEN

Check weekly, but do not water by the calendar. Water only when the mix is dry throughout and the pot feels light; then water and drain.



FERTILIZER

Miracle-Gro Water Soluble All Purpose Plant Food (US 24-8-16)



AMOUNT

1/2 level teaspoon in 1 US gallon of water



WHAT THAT AMOUNT COVERS

Mix into water. Apply only enough solution to wet this pot and drain; the gallon is a mixing batch, not one pot's serving.



HOW OFTEN TO FEED

One spring feeding per year, at a watering the plant actually needs.



WHEN TO START OR PAUSE

Use for an established, actively growing plant after nursery feed ends. Skip while the plant is settling or growth has paused.

01 / EVERYDAY CARE

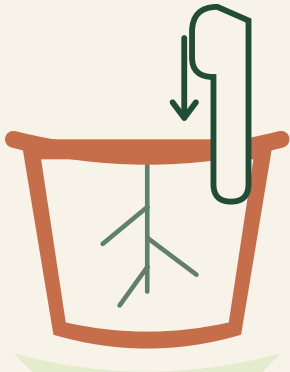


When to water.

Use a weekly reminder to check, never to water automatically. Wait until the mix is dry throughout and the pot feels light. Gently checking near the pot edge with a wooden skewer can help: damp deeper mix means wait even when the surface looks dry. Do not force it through the thick underground rhizomes. Once dry, water the root zone thoroughly, let excess drain, and empty the outer pot. Lower light reduces water use, so the wait can be long.

CHECK

Dry throughout



WATER

Wet the root zone



LET IT DRAIN

Let excess water drain



Water slowly until it drains; empty the saucer

Illustration · not to scale

Check before watering. Check weekly, but do not water by the calendar. Water only when the mix is dry throughout and the pot feels light; then water and drain. Original illustration; not to scale.

The easy rule

Check first. Water only when the plant needs it.

02 / PLANT FOOD



Exactly what to feed it.

Skip fertilizer while a new plant settles or its nursery feed is still active. Check the tag or ask the nursery when that feed ends. More food will not replace adequate light or make an already wet pot healthy.

MEASURE

1/2 level tsp

DISSOLVE

1 US gal water

USE WHAT IS NEEDED

**Wet the roots;
let excess drain**



Mixing batch ≠ a whole-pot serving

Illustration · not to scale

1/2 level teaspoon in 1 US gallon of water Mix into water. Apply only enough solution to wet this pot and drain; the gallon is a mixing batch, not one pot's serving. One spring feeding per year, at a watering the plant actually needs. Use for an established, actively growing plant after nursery feed ends. Skip while the plant is settling or growth has paused. Original illustration; not to scale.

US PRODUCT REFERENCE

Miracle-Gro

Water Soluble All Purpose

24-8-16

Soluble: mix into water

Check the official US product ↗

Illustrated reference; check the manufacturer's current packaging and US label.



ONE SPRING FEEDING, IF ACTIVELY GROWING

Miracle-Gro Water Soluble All Purpose Plant Food (US 24-8-16)

Mix ½ level teaspoon of Miracle-Gro Water Soluble All Purpose Plant Food (US 24-8-16) into 1 US gallon of water. Feed once in spring at a watering the plant actually needs, using only enough solution to wet this pot and drain. Start after nursery feed ends; skip if growth has paused. The dilution is the manufacturer's indoor rate. Once a year is this plan's conservative choice within NC State's once-or-twice-yearly guidance, not the product's general two-week schedule. Do not empty a gallon into one small pot.

[Check the manufacturer's product page ↗](#)

Use the named US formulation. A different product or concentration needs different directions. The amount mixed is a batch, not a dose to pour into one pot.

03 / WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

Recognizing slow, healthy growth

ZZ grows slowly and may stay much the same between new shoots. Lower indoor light makes growth slower still. A quiet spell does not by itself call for extra water or fertilizer; check moisture and light first.

Growing indoors through winter

Start indoors year-round in a warm room with bright, indirect light. Keep it away from cold windows and strong direct sun. Lower-light tolerance is not a promise that it can live in darkness.

For regional planting windows, [find your local Cooperative Extension office ↗](#).

Something looking off?

Why are the stems soft and the leaves yellow?

Check for a wet pot before adding water. Too much moisture can rot ZZ rhizomes; yellow leaves with soft growth need closer inspection. Empty trapped water and check that the drainage holes are open. If the base is soft or deterioration continues, ask local Extension for help; leaf color alone is not a diagnosis.

Can I put it in a dark bathroom?

It still needs useful light. ZZ tolerates low light, but growth slows, and complete darkness cannot support a houseplant. Use a window with indirect light or suitable artificial plant lighting; a bathroom light switched on briefly for visits is not a dependable growing setup.

Is ZZ plant safe for pets to chew?

No. ASPCA includes ZZ among plants with insoluble calcium oxalate crystals. Chewing can cause mouth pain and irritation, drooling, or vomiting. Keep it out of reach and contact your veterinarian if ingestion is suspected. If you want a non-toxic-listed option, compare spider plant, while still discouraging chewing.



Repotting and checking moisture

Repot when roots crowd the container

A pot bulging around the thick underground rhizomes or tightly crowded roots is a reason to check for repotting. During active growth, move up only 1–2 inches in diameter and use fresh draining mix. A larger starter pot is not a shortcut to faster growth.

Use reminders to check, not automatically water

The reminder means inspect, not irrigate. A dry top layer can conceal damp mix lower down. Use the deeper moisture check and the pot's weight together; a ZZ plant and a spider plant on the same shelf should not automatically be watered on the same day.



Help with your next step.

Keep water out of the outer pot

A draining inner pot still stays too wet if collected water is left around it.

Use a check, not a watering calendar

Learn the shared check-first habit, then follow ZZ's specific dry-through trigger.

BEHIND THIS GUIDE

Where the advice comes from.

Plant care is based on the sources below. Planting layouts and beginner routines combine that guidance into one practical plan; they are editorial choices, not results from a Plant Care Steps growing trial.

- NC State Extension: dry-through watering, light, sparse feeding, and division ↗
<https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/zamioculcas-zamiifolia/>
- UConn: slower low-light growth, rhizomes, and patient leaf propagation ↗
<https://homegarden.cahnr.uconn.edu/factsheets/zz-plant/>
- Minnesota Extension: light is essential and dimmer plants use less water ↗
<https://extension.umn.edu/garden-and-home/yard-and-garden/gardening-in-minnesota/lighting-for-indoor-plants>
- Illinois Extension: pot size and settling in a new houseplant ↗
<https://extension.illinois.edu/houseplants/get-started>
- Manufacturer: US fertilizer formula and application directions ↗
<https://scottsmiraclegro.com/en-us/brands/miracle-gro/products/plant-food-and-care/miracle-gro-water-soluble-all-purpose-plant-food.html>
- ASPCA: ZZ chewing irritation and when to contact a veterinarian ↗
<https://www.asPCA.org/news/these-houseplants-can-cause-trouble-your-pets>

Something needs updating? [Suggest a correction](#)

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Compiled with AI assistance. These first-edition guides have not yet had an independent horticultural review. Read our editorial approach.