

#LIFESTYLE

Indoor Plants That Don't Need a Lot of Sunlight

These overlooked house plants can survive in the dark, almost.



Begonias

We've talked a lot about hard-to-kill houseplants, especially when it comes to really dark homes that don't get tons of natural light. You probably know about cast iron plants, the ZZ, and the sansevieria. But here are a handful of often overlooked plants that you might not know do well in low light, and don't remind you of the doctor's office.

These plants offer a wide range of leaf colours and shapes and, if you get a Rex Begonia, it will live quite happily without any direct light. Just make sure you don't overwater it. Soak it and let it dry out, and repeat.

Swedish Ivy

Plectranthus australis has an old-fashioned look that sort of reminds you of grandma. And fun fact: it's actually neither Swedish, nor an ivy. Also called Creeping Charlie, it's a fast-growing trailing plant that works well in hanging planters. It's an ideal plant for beginners, because it thrives in a range of soil, watering, and light conditions.



Mint

Mint will normally grow in a bog, so as long as you keep it moist and it gets a little bit of light, you should be able to harvest mint for tea, fruit salads, and cocktails. It has the added advantage of giving off a nice scent indoors.



Moss Terrariums

If you seriously have very little light, consider creating a moss terrarium. It just needs moisture and glances of light. Position it near a window where it can get reflected light and it should thrive. If you don't know where to start, consider a kit to get you going, or buy a beautiful one that's already constructed. The moss terrariums from Doodle Birdie on Etsy are remarkably beautiful and ready to go.



Maidenhair Ferns

Maidenhair Ferns are fantastic because they have frilly, fun leaves that are different from the usual thick leaves of indoor plants. Most ferns do well inside with low light (and ferns look great in terrariums).



Amazing Folk Dances.

Band Baja Baraat & Jaipur



Sadhana Garg
Journalist & social entrepreneur

Kukas, once a slumbering Industrial town set up by RIICO today is a hub of upscale lux hotels that have become centres of destination weddings. There are around 22 Hotels in this quaint township with a scenic ambience. 10 miles from Amber one can find a hotel for any segment, be it ultra-luxury, luxury or even mid-segment.

Beside finding the right life partner these days choosing the right venue for the wedding is the most vital decision that impacts a couple's life. A venue for a wedding has become the single largest expense and yet is most variable. Gone are the days when dowry given to the bride was a major item on a wedding spreadsheet. That expense has been replaced by the choice of a venue. If it is a 'destination wedding' then so much better. Best summed up by a popular saying in the event management jargon: 'the sizzle costs more than the steak.'

As first planned city of the country, Jaipur celebrates its 294th foundation day every year in 18th November. With time it has also earned for itself the reputation of the most favoured wedding destination not only in the country but globally as far as the NRIs go. In fact says an event manager 'It's not only the Desi Indians from abroad who have made Jaipur their venue for the wedding in the family but from time to time even the foreigners have come to Rajasthan to tie the knot. Hollywood actress Liz

#WEDDING-WIRE

Hurley and Arun Nayar the textile tycoon and later Priyanka Chopra and Nick Jonas settled for Mehrangarh Fort in Jodhpur. Katty Perry and Russel Brand went to Aman-i-Khas a resort near Ranthambore Tiger Reserve. The seriously rich celebrities in settling for a fit for a princess kind of a wedding were following a trend that had long been kick-started by the Indian money bags. According to a conservative estimate in Jaipur alone around 300 weddings with a kitty of 2 crores and above are held in a wedding season. Kukas, once a slumbering Industrial town set up by RIICO today is a hub of upscale lux hotels

that have become centres of destination weddings. There are around 22 Hotels in this quaint township with a scenic ambience. 10 miles from Amber one can find a hotel for any segment, be it ultra-luxury, luxury or even mid-segment.

The maximum number of wedding held in Jaipur are from NCR, points out Arshad Hussain past President of Federation of Rajasthan Event Managers. Kukas has earned many brownie points firstly it's located on the Delhi-Jaipur Highway making it easy to commute. The traffic snarls are missing and the motorable road is good. The air is clean. Jaipur, in spite of being expensive, works out cheaper than having a wedding in the NCR. The Kukas hotels with their sprawling properties and gardens surrounded by the Aravalli range create a luxurious heritage

ambience. Fairmont, the only hotel in the country of its flagship brand is preferred due to its ultra-luxurious hospitality and interiors that transport a client to the days of fairy tale fort living. JW Marriott is second to none in its bookings for destination weddings.

The most recent addition to the Kukas hospitality bandwidth is ITC's 130 rooms luxury proposed property spread over 30 acres, under its brand 'Mementos'.

Hitherto ITC Rajputana in the midst of a busy city zone without a large garden layout had been missing out on big ticket weddings. No wonder Anil Chadha, Chief Executive, ITC Hotels termed the move as growth story driven by an asset right strategy. "After 'Mementos Udaipur' earlier this month to 'Mementos Jaipur', this is the second addition to the ITC inventory it is hoped it too will figure as a venue for a big fat Indian wedding. Shiv Vilas and Le Meridien are some of the other hotels - though somewhat second in the range. As per the norms of the hospitality sector Jaipur is a complete package. There are enough built heritage sites that offer royal settings for a wedding event just as the pink city is a shopper's paradise. The rich cultural living traditions and its communities of heritage performers further add the right

regal flavour to a couple's most memorable fanfare. Be it Kacchi ghodi, Kalbeliya, Ghoomar dancers, Bhavai, Gair, Chari dances, folk artists or maand that were once being pushed beyond the pale of civilisation have due to the Indian wedding fund new means to stay alive by performing at a wedding wherein ceremonies are spread over at least two-three days. The guest on their part are only too happy to be in step with the rhythm and regal verve of rich culture of Rajasthan. Who can deny that the colourful presence of these artists adds to the lavish enjoyment of the weddings that have with time at worst become vulgar display of wealth and at best a resplendent pageantry. The 20 camels hired by Katy Perry - Russell Brand wedding to be part of the procession or 'baraat' as we know it is a case in point. In the city, Rambagh Hotel built in the Indo Saracenic style and once the residence of Maharaja Sawai Man Singh and his world famous third wife Maharani Gayatri Devi is now a sprawling palace hotel. An ultimate in luxury and experiential hospitality it is with the Taj group making it one of the premier palace hotels in the world. Much smaller to Rambagh in number of rooms and size is Rajmahal Hotel. Fabled to have been built in 1729 for a Sisodia princess it later became the residence of the British Residents.

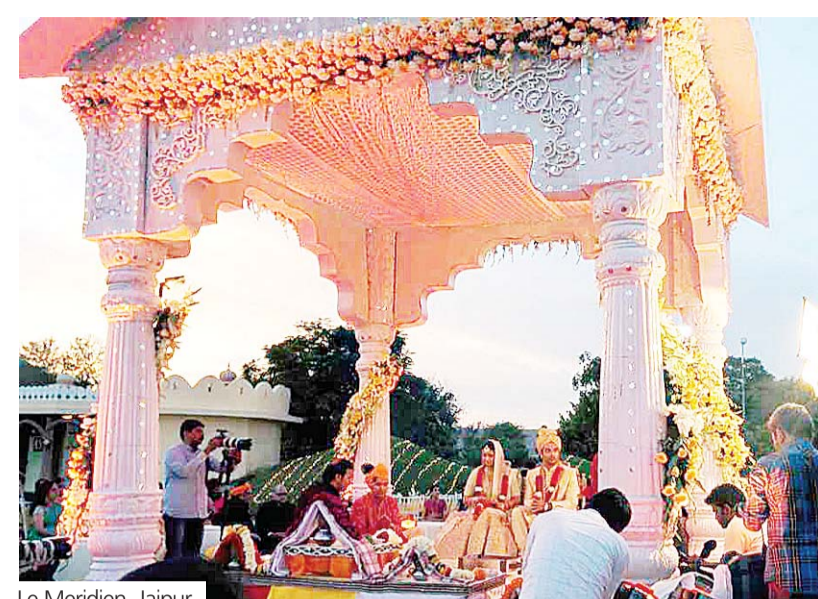


Jaipur Mahal Palace, Jaipur.

World Techno Day



There is just something so compelling about the driving rhythm that reaches right down into the depths of the soul, and brings out that base-animal nature. For some, techno is just music that gets their heart rate up. For others, it's a shamanistic dive into the psychedelic and writhing body that brings about an altered state, irrespective of any chemical influence. World Techno Day is dedicated to bringing more people into the world of techno music.



Le Meridien, Jaipur



Destination wedding in Jaipur.

built in 1729 for a Sisodia princess who wished to distance herself from the intrigues of the Zenana at the City palace it later became the residence of the British Residents and later also of their royal Highnesses of Jaipur. It was then that it earned the sole distinction of having hosted Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip and Jacqueline Kennedy on another occasion as private guests.

Both the hotels and Jai Mahal Palace Hotel are popular choices for any wedding extravaganza. The laid out Mughal gardens lending themselves to a picture perfect recreation of the old world charm - a USP of city hotels that as Arshad said 'Delhi might be the capital of India but Jaipur has become the destination wedding capital of the world.'

The big fat Indian wedding market is of about 300 lakh corers of which Rajasthan bags 50 percent and of that only half is accounted for as 'organised' sector or simply put pays taxes to the government' divulges an industry insider on conditions of anonymity.

Post Covid as the New Normal becomes a thing of the past and the 'shaadi economy' reboots, cash registers ring with the band, baja and baraat back in the Pink city.

Much smaller to Rambagh in number of rooms and size is Rajmahal Hotel. Fabled to have been

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#LITERATURE FEST

Of Books, Art & Fun!

The Pink City witnessed the best of books, art and performances at the first ever 'Kukdukoo - kid's literature festival'. With a stellar line up of author sessions, immersive stories, clown and mime performance, art and creative writing workshops, the event was conceptualized to promote children's creativity and interest in literature and arts.



Tusharika Singh
Freelance writer and city blogger

An initiative taken by two young and enterprising fathers, who believe that every child deserves an equal opportunity, Kukdukoo - India's popular literature festival for children had its first stint in the Pink City recently. Held at the city's multi arts and cultural centre, Jawahar Kala Kendra, the 2-day event was a celebration of childhood through literature and arts.

Especially curated for children between the ages 2.5 years to 12 years and their parents, the festival intrigued the kids and instilled a deep seated love for books, reading, stories, art forms and much more. With a series of immersive and multi-disciplinary experiences including author sessions, several shows and performances such as clown, mime, story-drama, creative writing workshops, the event worked as a great weekend family get-away for spending time creatively. The book fair, food and shopping display were also a crowd puller.



The event witnessed the presence of prominent personalities including award-winning and acclaimed authors, artists and performers from all over the country. Authors like Seema Chari, Varsha Seshan, Ajit Narayan, Aditya Mubayi, Madhirima Vidyarthi attended the show along with acclaimed storytellers like Lopamudra Mohanty, Simi Srivastava, Soema Wahi Mukherjee, Shalini Bansal, Garima Arya, among others. Similarly, well known performing artists like Walter Peter (renowned Indian clowning

artist), Kunal Motling (Indian Charlie Chaplin), Purple Mangoes (renowned clown company), were also a part of the event.



Telling more about the objective of the event, Avishek Roy, Co-Founder, Kukdukoo, said, "We need a directional change to move our young children away from gadgets and other distractions and develop the love for books, stories, art and creativity. This is a conscious and directed effort to bring to our young children, much-needed exposure to literature, creativity, art and our cultural heritage."

Echoing Roy's thoughts, Mr. Jugendra Balyan shares "With this fest, our intention is simple and clear - to keep the kids engaged while also igniting their minds through the nuances, finesse and appreciation for literature and art."

With an idea to spread the love of reading and stories, nurture young art enthusiasts, and indulge young kids in various fun and educational activities, all at one platform, Kukdukoo came into being in the year 2019 and gained popularity as a well-known platform for kids' festival.

#COVID-19

Where Did Omicron Come From?

BA.1 Omicron variant evolved gradually, during which time the virus increasingly adapted to existing human immunity.

First discovered a year ago in South Africa, the SARS-CoV-2 variant later dubbed 'Omicron' spread across the globe at incredible speed. It is still unclear exactly how, when and where this virus originated. Now, a study published in the journal Science by researchers from Charité - Universitätsmedizin Berlin and a network of African institutions shows that Omicron's predecessors existed on the African continent long before cases were first identified, suggesting that Omicron emerged gradually over several months in different countries across Africa.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the coronavirus has been constantly changing. The biggest leap seen in the evolution of SARS-CoV-2 to date was observed by researchers a year ago, when a variant was discov-

ered that differed from the genome of the original virus by more than 50 mutations. First detected in a patient in South Africa in mid-November 2021, the variant later named Omicron BA.1 spread to 87 countries around the world within just a few weeks. By the end of December, it had replaced the previously dominant Delta variant worldwide.

Since then, speculations about the origin of this highly transmissible variant have centered around two main theories: Either the coronavirus jumped from a human to an animal where it evolved before infecting a human again as Omicron, or the virus survived in a person with a compromised

immune system for a longer period of time and that's where the mutations occurred. A new analysis of COVID-19 samples collected in Africa before the first detection of Omicron now casts doubt on both these hypotheses.

The analysis was carried out by an international research team led by Prof. Jan Felix Drexler, a scientist at the Institute of Virology at Charité and the German Centre for Infection Research (DZIF). Other key partners in the European-African network included Stellenbosch University in South Africa and the Laboratory of Viral Hemorrhagic Fever (LFHB) in Benin.

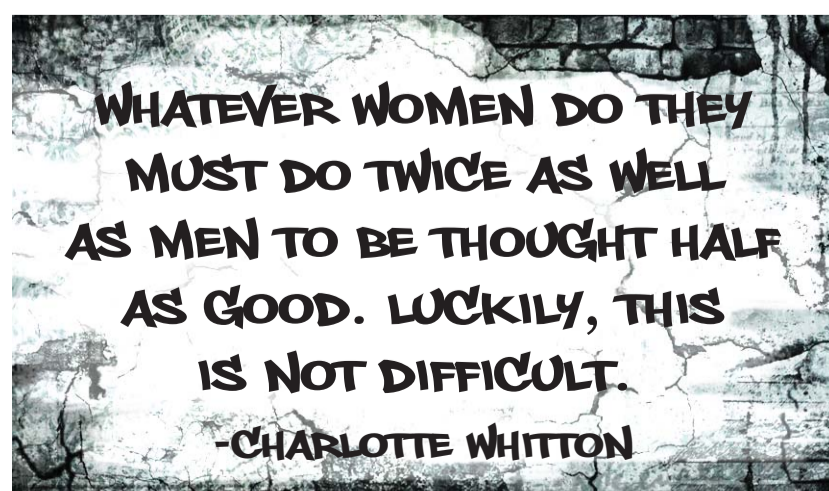
The scientists started by developing a special PCR test to specifically detect the Omicron variant BA.1. They then tested more than 13,000 respiratory samples from COVID-19 patients that had been taken in 22 African countries between mid-2021 and early 2022. In doing so, the research team found viruses with Omicron-specific mutations in 25 people from six different countries who contracted COVID-19 in August and September 2021 - two months before the variant was first detected in South Africa.

To learn more about Omicron's origins, the researchers also decoded, or 'sequenced,' the viral genome of

some 670 samples. Such sequencing makes it possible to detect new mutations and identify novel viral lineages. The team discovered several viruses that showed varying degrees of similarity to Omicron, but they were not identical. "Our data show that Omicron had different ancestors that interacted with each other and circulated in Africa, sometimes concurrently, for months," explains Prof. Drexler. "This suggests that the BA.1 Omicron variant evolved gradually, during which time the virus increasingly adapted to existing human immunity." In addition, the PCR data led the researchers to conclude that although Omicron did not originate solely in South Africa, it first dominated infection rates there before spreading from south to north across the African continent within only a few weeks.



THE WALL



BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman