

# maranta group



MARANTA LEUCONEURA KERCHOVIANA  
GREEN PRAYER PLANT, RABBIT'S TRACKS



CALATHEA ZEBRINA  
ZEBRA PLANT

### DESCRIPTION

Marantas (Ma-RAN-tas), *Calatheas* (kaluh-THEE-as), *Ctenanthes* (tee-NAN-thees) and *Stromanthes* (stroh-MAN-thees) are closely related, low-growing foliage plants that are among the *Maranta* group. The plants' leaves are notable for their colored veins and blotched markings on backgrounds from white to the darkest green. While some do flower, this is rare indoors.

### DECORATIVE LIFE

With proper care, these plants can live indoors for years.

### AVAILABILITY

Year-round.

### in-store and consumer care

**WATER** In spring through fall, water regularly with tepid water so the soil stays moist. Don't use hard water, and note that some plants are sensitive to fluoride in tap water, which can cause brown leaf tips. Reduce watering in winter.

**LIGHT** Keep the plants out of direct sun-

light; their colors can fade in light that is too bright, or their leaves can be scorched. These plants do well under fluorescent lights.

**TEMPERATURE** Average warm indoor temperatures are appropriate; avoid temperatures below 55 F.

**HUMIDITY** Mist the leaves frequently, or use a pebble tray to keep the humidity level high.

**FERTILIZER** Feed regularly with a half-diluted plant food; reduce feedings in winter.

**PROPAGATION** Plants can be propagated through division.

### challenges

**PESTS AND PROBLEMS** Watch for spider mites, which are prevented through appropriate humidity and can be treated with an insecticide. Too-dry conditions also can cause leaf loss.

**LEAF PROBLEMS** Brown leaf tips may be an indication of spider mites (see above) or may mean the air is too dry. Remove the dead leaves, and mist the plant regularly. Yellowing, curled or spotted leaves may indicate underwatering. Limp stems indicate overwatering, particularly in winter.

### fun facts

**FAMILY** *Marantas*, *Calatheas*, *Ctenanthes* and *Stromanthes* are members of the *Marantaceae* (arrowroot) family, which also includes *Thalias*.

**WHAT'S IN A NAME** *Marantas* are named after Bartolommeo Maranta, a 16th-century Venetian botanist. *Calathea* comes from the Greek "kalathos," which means "basket," for the way the leaves cup the plants' flowers. *Ctenanthe* is from the Greek roots "kteis," for "comb," and "anthos," for "flower." *Stromanthes* begins with the Greek root "stroma," for "bed."

**HOME SWEET HOME** The plants are native to the tropical Americas, particularly Brazil.

**IMPORTANT CROP** *Maranta arundinacea*, Bermuda arrowroot, is a species known to cooks because its roots can be eaten fresh or made into flour, also known as arrowroot. Some varieties of the *Canna* and *Tacca* genres also have edible roots and have arrowroot among their common names, but they are not members of the *Marantaceae* family.



CTENANTHE



MARANTAS  
PRAYER PLANTS

## meet the family

**MARANTA** The common name “prayer plant” describes the leaves’ habit of folding up at night like praying hands. Most leaves are about 6 inches long.

**CALATHEA** The leaves of the *Calathea* genus exhibit an array of beautiful patterns. Most have a reddish underside, and they can grow up to 16 inches long.

**CTENANTHE** *C. oppenheimiana tricolor*, commonly known as never-never plant, is the most prevalent indoor variety and has thin leaves that grow up to 18 inches long.

**STROMANTHE** Though less easy to find, the most common species is *S. amabilis*. Its leaf markings are similar to those of *Calathea*.



CALATHEA HYBRID 'CORA'

## varieties to check out

■ *Maranta tricolor*, also *M. leuconeura erythrophylla* (herringbone plant) - bold red veins distinguish this species, which also sports yellow and green hues.

■ *M. leuconeura kerchoviana* (rabbit’s tracks) - takes its common name from the two rows of dark patches down its green leaves.

■ *Calathea crocata* - unlike most *Calatheas*, this species has plain leaves but is known for its orange-red flowers that arise on thin stems.

■ *C. roseopicta* - this showy species combines pale and dark greens with a dramatic rose-colored underside to its leaves.



M. LEUCONEURA ERYTHRONEURA  
RED PRAYER PLANT,  
HERRINGBONE PLANT



C. ROSEOPICTA  
ROSE-PAINTED CALATHEA

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