

Happy At The Gym—Finally!

# Women's Health

The \$6  
Trick To  
Dewy  
Skin

**BEST.  
BUTT.  
EVER!**

**FIRM IT**

3 Easy Moves To  
High & Tight

**FLATTER IT**

Sexy Jeans & Cool  
Workout Leggings

**LOVE IT**

Top Confidence  
Boosters

\*PSSST...

**THE CONFESSIONS ISSUE!**

**READERS, CELEBS & PROS TALK**

- >HEALTH TABOOS
- >LOVE & INFIDELITY
- >JOBS, MONEY, MORE!

**25 HOT  
BOD  
SECRETS**

From Women Who  
Work Out For A Living

**Snack  
Your Way To  
Weight Loss**

**Gabrielle Union**

How a Girl Who Loves  
Bread and Bacon  
Got This Fit

**SEX SURVEY!**  
The Orgasm Intel  
6,000 People Swear By



## Digging Up the Dirt

Your most fertile plant questions—answered

### “What if I’m too clueless to even talk to a salesperson?”

You can score some good plants even if you don’t know a cactus from a chrysanthemum. It’s wise for newbs to hit the nursery on a weekday, when the crowds are thinner, so you can have more uninterrupted one-on-one with the salesperson. Tell him about the light in your space, since it’s the most important plant-success factor (see “Go into the Light,” page 84). Also describe *yourself*—be up-front about how much time and effort you’re willing to commit. A salesperson can steer you to a match only if you’re honest. Then get into aesthetics: Maybe your house has minimalist-chic vibes and you need a few geometric succulents to complement the decor; perhaps you want to make your bathroom into a lush oasis. In the end, if you can’t grab someone’s attention, let yourself gravitate toward any plant you like the look of, and check out its tag. That will give you a bit to go on: how much light and water it needs.

### “Will I accidentally murder every plant?”

Green thumbs are not genetic; anyone can learn basic plant-survival skills. Christopher Satch, the director of plant education at The Sill, a plant shop that does indoor plant design in New York City, says the biggest mistake he sees is overwatering. Symptoms include limp, yellowing leaves and certain types of fungus, bacteria, and rot, which cause squishy, soft stems. If you accidentally over-drench a plant, let it dry out, then water only when the soil feels dry three inches below the surface—*not* on a set schedule. Of course, you might also *underwater*. If the leaves look dry, brown, and brittle, and the soil is stiff and dry, that’s the problem. So,

obviously, water it a bit, then a bit more, and regularly check the dirt to make sure it’s spongy and moist.

If you notice a white film on the leaves, it’s not plant dandruff; it’s powdery mildew, which is caused by another type of fungus. Prune away that foliage, give it plenty of H<sub>2</sub>O, and sit it on a sill. Not working? A nursery can direct you to a fungicide, like neem oil. If you find that your plant growth seems stunted, it might be root-bound, which happens when there isn’t enough space in the container for roots to expand. Repot it in a larger container. If your flowering plant is bloom-free, move it somewhere brighter and warmer.

Or you could always choose a plant that’s virtually unkillable—Marimo moss balls and snake plants can survive extreme neglect. Pothos plants are another great option, since they’re resilient; if you accidentally under- or overwater, they’ll show the signs quickly and bounce right back.

### Click This

Like regular porn, the plant variety flourishes online. Logees.com, WhiteFlowerFarm.com, and TheSill.com ship specimens as good as any in a greenhouse; PlantLust.com lists dozens of plants’ soil, sun, and water needs, plus tells you where to buy them. Cool planters abound at DWR.com, ConcreteWaveDesign.com, MenuDesignShop.com, and Trnk-NYC.com (or search “planters” under “buyable pins” on Pinterest). Find a fab container without a drainage hole? Layer gravel at the bottom before you plant.



## HEALTH

### “Where do I even put the things?”

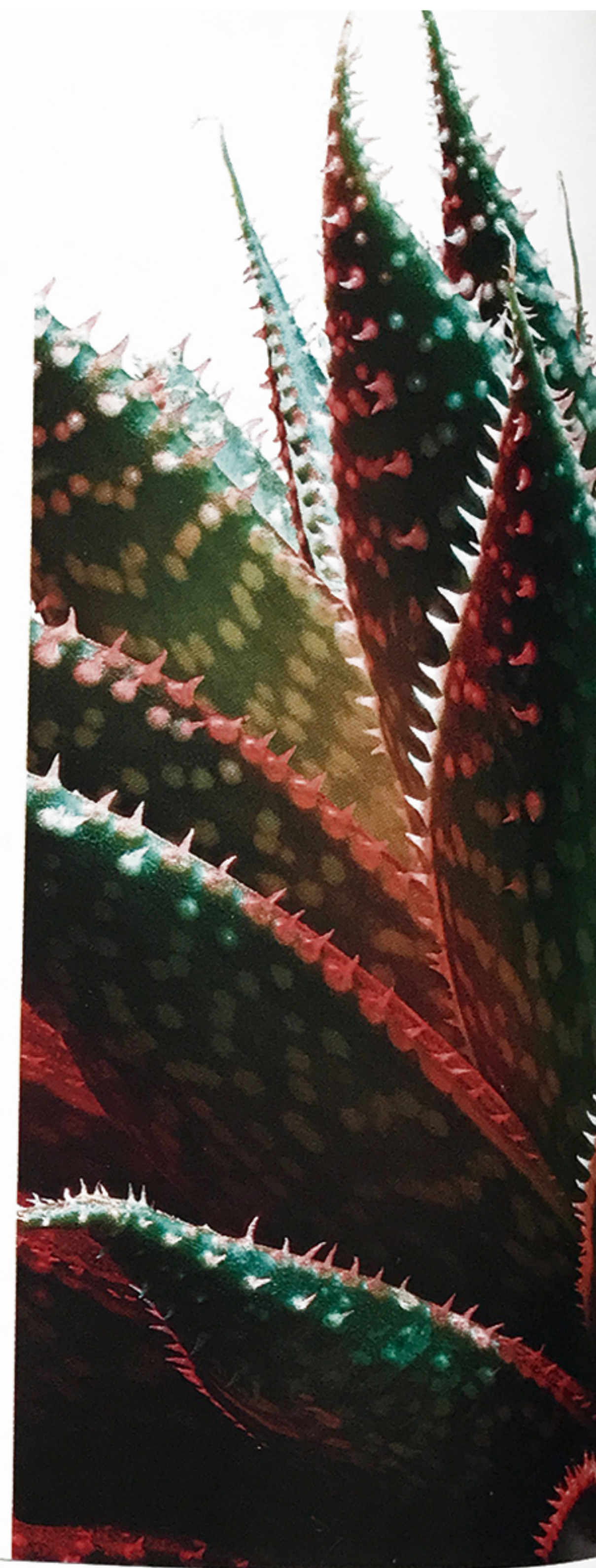
This is where all your HGTV watching pays off: Plants are about style as much as about science. As long as you can provide the right type of light, your options for decorating are limitless. Mara Silber, an interior designer in New York City, suggests treating small plants like accessories, placing just one or a cluster anywhere you would a ceramic bowl or decorative object. To highlight a focal wall or a bed, she recommends hanging plants from the walls on sturdy hooks—like ones

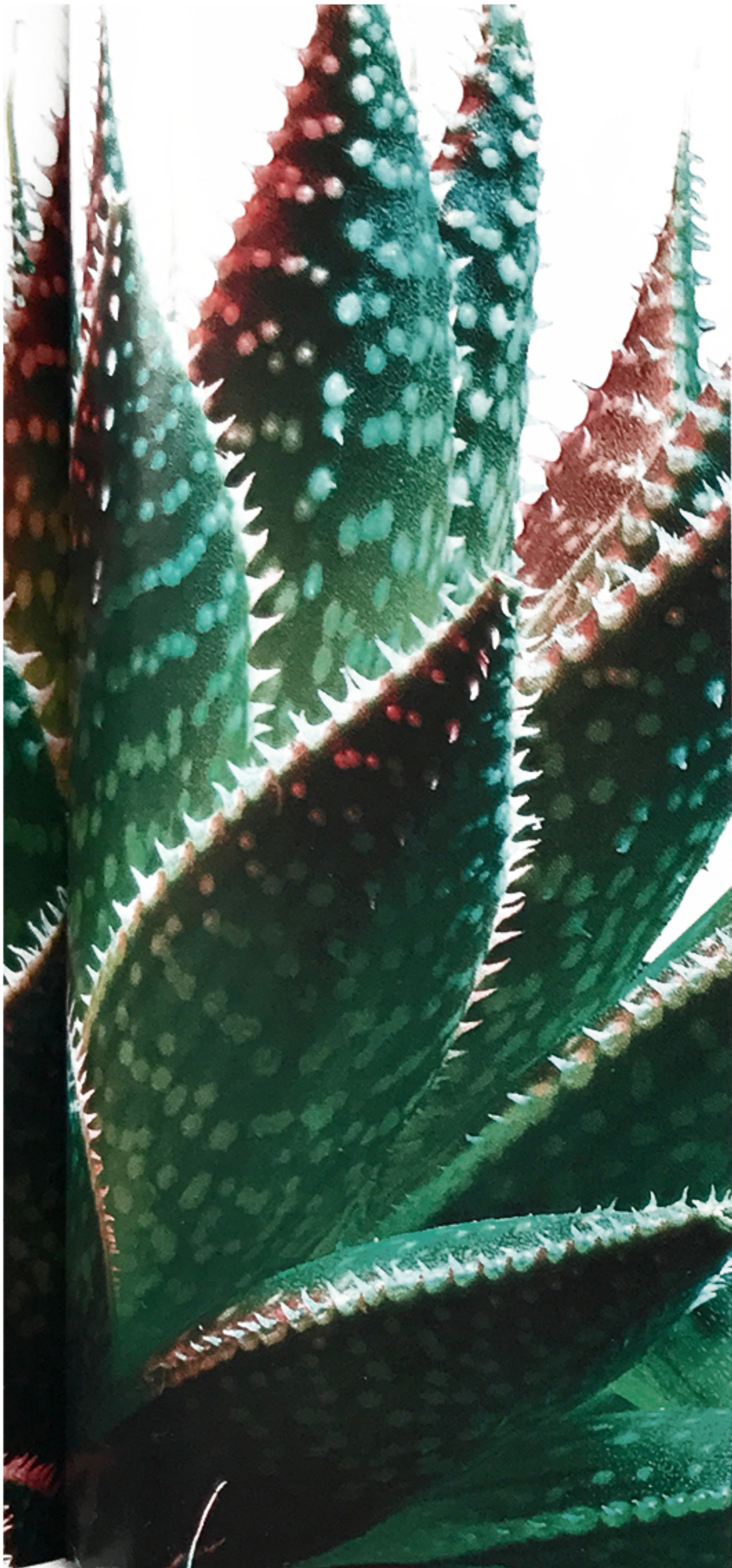
meant for hanging coats—and from the ceiling as an alternative to putting them on shelves. You can also display plants on pedestals; Silber likes to group multiple pedestals in varying heights.

Open floor plans benefit from large-scale plants like rubber trees (use a couple to carve out distinct spaces in one big great room). And small places, contrary to what you might think, can be made to feel bigger by placing a large plant at eye level. “Plants are a regenerating accessory,” Silber says. “Each one will change and take on a life of its own, so your space will always feel fresh.”

### Go into the Light

Deciphering the best plants for your space depends on how much sunlight you get. Try a simple trick from botanist Christopher Satch: Lay a blank sheet of paper where you plan to stick your greenery. At midday, hold your hand two feet above the paper. If there's a sharp-edged shadow, you're working with full sun or bright indirect light. A fuzzy shadow means medium light or low, indirect light; low light will cast no shadow at all. If you have glaring sunlight, look for cacti and succulents; if the room's practically a cave, check out rubber trees, snake plants, ferns, and ivies. If it's a happy medium, you'll want begonias or philodendrons.





## “Am I going to poison my child—or my pets?”

There are plenty of nontoxic houseplants, like African violets, ferns, and roses. That said, a long list of others range in toxicity. In people and pets, ingesting philodendron

and pothos can cause vomiting, tongue swelling, and diarrhea; oleander can be fatal. To protect kids, your local health department should have a list of toxic plants, but to be safe, call the American Association of Poison Control Centers' hotline (800-222-1222) before buying *any* plant; find a pet-safe list at ASPCA.org.

## Glass Houses

The inherent adorableness of terrariums may explain why a quick search on Etsy brings up nearly 50,000 items. (Check out the shops Waen and GlimpseGlass, as well as ShopTerrain.com and WestElm.com for glass garden enclosures.) You can fill a terrarium with an air plant, which doesn't require soil. Once a week, remove the plant, place it in a bowl of water covering the roots and leaves, and soak for 10 to 20 minutes. Allow it to dry completely in an empty bowl or over paper towels before placing it back in its terrarium. Or create your own mini garden with ferns, mosses, cacti, or succulents:

**1** Layer gravel, sheet moss, and soil in the bottom of the terrarium, then remove your plants from their plastic pots.

**2** Gently shake the soil from around their roots and place them in the terrarium (use tweezers or tongs if necessary). Gently pack the soil back around the plant base.

**3** If you chose cacti and succulents, place your terrarium in a sunny spot and water once every week; for ferns and mosses, hang in the shade and mist every two to four weeks. ■