

# HOMES+ CONDOS

## PLANT SELLS FOR MORE THAN \$20K

A plant lover in New Zealand recently made headlines for not only having a green thumb, but also having plenty of green to spare. The auction site Trade Me featured a rare philodendron minimums houseplant that one buyer paid \$27,100 New Zealand dollars for — beating out more than 200 other bidders.

The species, also known as rhipidophora tetrasperma or “mini monstera,” is native to Thailand and Malaysia and



is normally coloured plain green. But this particular philodendron minima's desirability stems from its unusual variegation: It has a mutation that turns its leaves mostly white, with splotches of green.

“This plant has 8 leaves with the 9th just about to uncurl,” the listing read.

The plant is the most expensive ever sold on TradeMe.

Melissa Hank

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SECTION C



It's important to think about the type of pet you have and design accordingly, says designer Louis Duncan-He. There is no one solution that fits all approach when it comes to pets.

# PET PROJECTS

Requests for ‘pet-friendly’ home designs on the rise

LOUISE RACHLIS

There has ‘most definitely’ been an increase in decorating homes with animals in mind, according to national designer Louis Duncan-He.

Duncan-He says he lucked out and decided to get his mini-golden doodle Archie the fall before the pandemic and has “noticed that the wait lists to get pets have either doubled or tripled in time — not to mention also the prices,” he says.

“It’s very normal that the more inward we’ve been and forced to adapt to, the more companionship we want,” he says. “The level of requests I get for ‘pet friendly’ is starting to rival ‘kid proof.’”

Duncan-He advises it’s important to think about the type of pet you have and design accordingly. “For example, if you have a cat, they love to dig their nails into anything with grit — rattan, a heavy weave, caning. Cats are way less likely to scratch something that has no grip; think suede, velvet and microsuedes. Dogs on the

other hand can just be a lot more chaotic in general, and so I would focus more on durability and rub count.”

Designer Sascha Lafleur of West of Main in Ottawa agrees that when it comes to designing, you should plan ahead if you have pets, especially dogs. “Think about the functionality of each space and how your dog will also use the space,” says Lafleur, whose companion animal is Duke. “For example, in your kitchen, where’s your dog’s bag of food going to be stored? Where are the feeding bowls going to go? You want these spaces to be easy to access and maintain but also not be an eyesore.”

In a current West of Main project, they’ve made sure to create a feeding space that is hidden and has a backsplash all the way down to make for easy cleanup. “Another incredibly practical element we’ve incorporated is a dog washing station just off the mud room,” says Lafleur. “It features raised flooring with a hand-held shower; perfect

for easy washing after a day at the dog park. As for decor, there are tons of dog-friendly performance fabrics that are easy to maintain so you don’t have to worry about ruining your beautiful sofa or occasional chair.”

Duncan-He adds that if you have a pet that tends to be “a little more slobbery,” then you want to think about treated fabrics as well that are easy to clean. In summary, there is no one solution that fits all approach with pets.

What can you do to prevent torn couches, chewed up furniture and damaged floors? “With having a pet, the overall responsibility is on the owner to create an environment that’s conducive to their pets,” he says.

“You want to make sure you’re firstly grooming your pet appropriately, making sure nails are trimmed regularly. And in addition to just getting more pet-friendly fabrics, you also have to consider the psychology of your pet. If a dog starts to act out, bite and chew up



Designer Sascha Lafleur says there are “tons of dog-friendly performance fabrics that are easy to maintain so you don’t have to worry about ruining your beautiful sofa or occasional chair.” JUSTIN THOMASON

your furniture, 99 per cent of the time it’s because they aren’t getting enough stimulation. A well exercised and stimulated pet is so much more likely to just chill out and follow their owner around half the time at home.”

It’s possible to make the home beautiful as well as comfortable for both companion animal and human, he says, “you just need to be purposeful.”

“I kind of take the same approach as I would if I were designing a home with a lot of young children,” says Duncan-He. “You want the appropriate storage solutions to be able to house all of the toys/accessories for your pet.”

He says you also want to try to keep any very animal specific looking items, like dog bowls or beds, as easy to blend into your overall aesthetic as possible.

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