



**POTTED HISTORY: HOW
HOUSEPLANTS TOOK
OVER OUR HOMES**

by Catherine Horwood

Pimpernel Press, £9.99
ISBN 978-1910258941

As houseplants undergo a renaissance in popularity this interesting book on the history of the houseplant has been fully revised and brought up to date.

Reviewer Rosanna Morris is a freelance writer.

It has been an exciting few years for the houseplant. You only have to scroll through countless Instagram photos of *Oxalis triangularis* or notice the number of independent plant shops propagating on high streets to understand how much they are enjoying a renaissance. String of hearts (*Ceropegia linearis* subsp. *woodii*) trail down walls, Swiss cheese vines (*Monstera adansonii*) in macramé hangers dangle from ceilings, and statuesque fiddle-leaf figs (*Ficus lyrata*) tower over sofas in homes up and down the land.

So much has changed in the story of the houseplant since social historian Catherine Horwood originally published her book *Potted History* in 2007 on how and why plants came to be an integral part of interior design. Now, 13 years on, she has written a final new chapter and published this updated second edition.

In her new chapter, Horwood makes the claim that houseplants are now more popular than they were in the

Victorian era, which was a boom time for indoor gardening with advances in travel and technology and the golden age of conservatory building (a subject covered earlier in the book). She discusses how many people have plants in their homes today and why she thinks this 'green revolution' has come about.

For those who have not encountered this book before, it is a fascinating history of the houseplant that looks at how plants have been used inside the home through the centuries from as early as the 1600s. The new addition is a thought-provoking read and explores reasons why the fashion for houseplants can wax and wane.

Colour images have been removed from this revised version, while the simple black and white illustrations remain. The cover has also had an update. It is now a drawing of a stripy elephant ear (*Alocasia zebrina*) – one of the most popular indoor plants today, according to Horwood.