

A thoughtful plant gift for a remote employee starts with choosing a variety listed as nontoxic to cats and dogs and checking that the recipient would welcome it. Get permission before arranging delivery, then include clear care guidance so the plant can settle into its new home without guesswork.

Pick a plant with pets in mind

Look for a plant identified as nontoxic to cats and dogs by the ASPCA. Plant names can be confusing: one common name may describe several different plants, so check the botanical name in the listing before ordering. If the seller has not included it, ask them to confirm the exact plant.

Some varieties to consider are:

- Spider plant, Chlorophytum comosum
- Baby rubber plant, Peperomia obtusifolia
- Moth orchid, Phalaenopsis species

Nontoxic is not the same as edible, so no plant is a snack recommendation. Chewing plant material can still upset a pet's stomach, and the recipient may prefer to keep the pot somewhere out of reach. If they have a type of pet other than a cat or dog, check the plant's safety for that animal separately.

Get permission before sending it

A home address is personal information, so ask the employee if they would like a plant and feel comfortable sharing an address for delivery. Make it easy for them to say no or suggest a different gift. They should not have to give a reason.

It is also useful to ask about timing. An employee who travels often may want the package to arrive on a day they can bring it indoors. If you hope to keep the gift a surprise, you can ask whether they are comfortable receiving a gift without telling them what is inside.

Sort out delivery and care

Before placing an order, confirm that the seller delivers to the employee's location and provides the plant's botanical name. Check the expected delivery window, along with any advice about shipping in very hot or cold weather. A plant left outside in harsh conditions may arrive, or remain on the doorstep, in poor shape.

Choose a pot size that is manageable and a plant whose care needs suit an indoor workspace. Include a short note about the light and watering it needs, or confirm that care instructions will be included with the order. Naming the plant in your note also lets the recipient look up its care details.

Make receiving the gift simple

Keep your message friendly and straightforward. If you can point to a specific contribution, thank the employee for it. Otherwise, a brief note of appreciation is enough and does not put them on the spot.

Ask what packing materials and extras come with the plant, and leave out anything whose contents are unclear. Fertilizer, decorative moss, and other additions may need their own safety checks. A simple plant in a secure pot means fewer things for the recipient to investigate.

Common questions

Are all orchids safe for cats and dogs?

Do not assume every orchid has the same safety profile. Check the exact plant. The ASPCA lists Phalaenopsis orchids as nontoxic to cats and dogs.

What if I am unsure whether the employee has pets?

Choose a plant listed as nontoxic to cats and dogs, and ask before sending it. The employee may have another kind of pet, or may simply prefer not to receive a plant.

Can a pet become unwell after chewing a nontoxic plant?

Yes. Eating plant material can cause stomach upset. If a pet seems unwell after chewing a plant, its owner should contact a veterinarian.

What should I do if the employee says no?

Respect their answer and offer another gift if that feels appropriate. The thought matters more than sending one particular plant.

Also helpful: surprise gift for someone far away