



HOUSEPLANTS & TROPICALS

TEMPERATURE

Potted plants do best in temperatures ranging from 65-70 degrees and cooler night temperatures. Temperatures below 40 degrees are dangerous for your tropicals. If houseplants are taken outside for the summer, make sure they are brought back indoors. When nighttime temperatures fall consistently to 50-55 degrees.

Avoid setting plants in an area of the room where hot air from radiators and vents blow on them. Also avoid placing them by cold drafty windows. Most plants love humidity. The air in our homes is usually dry because our air conditioning in summer and forced air heat in winter. A couple ways to compensate for this is to either use a humidifier or water tight trays filled with moist sand or gravel placed near your plants.

CONTAINERS & SOIL

Proper drainage is essential when it comes to houseplants. Choose a pot with drainage holes. If you need to use a pot with no holes in the bottom, you can pot up the plant into a more utilitarian pot with drainage and then set it into a more decorative pot. Take the inner pot out to a sink or tub to water it, then set it back into the decorative pot after the plant is done draining.

Use a soil that is labeled for containers. Do not use soil out of your garden, it is much too heavy and dense.

FERTILIZING

Fertilizing your houseplants should typically be done once a month to help with production of new growth. Houseplants typically don't need to be fertilized in the winter because they aren't growing very actively this time of the year.

Soluble balanced fertilizers such as 20-20-20 are generally sufficient for fertilizing houseplants.

Plants have been brought into the indoors and grown in container for centuries. Today they are still being sought out by homeowners, renters, and cats alike. Adding houseplants to your home has been proven to be very beneficial to the environment.

LIGHT REQUIREMENTS

All plants need light to grow. Almost all indoor environments have natural light even if it is not direct sun. Different plants have different light requirements but there are many choices to satisfy any indoor gardener's need.

Estimating the amount of light available for a houseplant is essential to selecting the proper plant. South, East, or West exposures provide the light levels for high light plants. Low light plants can survive in these rooms if they are placed farther into the room away from these windows. Rooms with north facing windows are good rooms for low light plants.

Flowering plants, succulent, cactus, and plants with lots of assorted colors in their leaves usually prefer direct sun if indoors. Adding artificial lighting is an option for increasing light levels in the home.

WATER REQUIREMENTS

Wilting foliage usually signals a need for water but it can also mean you have watered too much and the roots have rotted. A general rule of thumb is to let the soil dry down 1 inch for every 6 inches of soil depth. Stick your fingers into the soil about an inch or two down and feel whether it is moist or not.

Be thorough! It is best to water your plant from the top of the soil, near the base of the plant. Water until you see the water dripping through the bottom of the pot. This ensures a complete wetting of the entire root ball.

Taking your plant to a sink or tub to do this watering is a good idea. Water and let the plant drain. If your plant is too large to move, keep your plant on a saucer and after watering, dump the water out or "baste" the water out of the saucer. Do not let your plants sit in a saucer filled with water.

