

Houseplant Care

Light:

Most houseplants need bright, indirect light. A west-facing window is too bright and hot and may burn the leaves of many houseplants. On the other hand, a dim corner away from a window will cause many plants to drop leaves or become pale and spindly. If you can read a newspaper by the natural light in a room, it is probably bright enough for most houseplants.

High Light = As much light as possible. Within 3 feet of a sunny window.

Yucca	Fiddleleaf Fig
Croton	Most Palms
Weeping Fig	Succulents

Medium Light = Moderately lit area. Within 8 feet of a sunny window.

Anthurium	Dieffenbachia
Sago Palm	Hoya
Schefflera	Spider Plant
China Doll	Dracaena marginata

Low Light = Poorly lit area. Bright enough to allow reading during the day.

Cast Iron Plant (Aspidistra)	Chinese Evergreen (Aglaonema)
ZZ Plant	Peace Lily (Spathiphyllum)
Pothos	Corn Plant (Dracaena massangeana)
Philodendron	

Watering:

Many factors come into play when determining water requirements such as container size, season, rate of growth, light, and temperature. Do not follow a strict schedule but do check your plants regularly and learn their preferences. Always water thoroughly, filling the pot completely and until water drains out the bottom of the pot. Adding just a cup or so at a time leads to improper wetting, unhealthy roots and dangerous salt build up. Water will run out of the pot rapidly if a plant is pot bound or overly dry. To moisten over dry soil, soak the plant in a tub of water for a few minutes. Also, slightly warm water will penetrate soils more easily than cold. Never allow plants to sit in water-filled saucers. To remove excess salts (seen as yellow/brown drainage water), flush the container with water until water runs clear. Doing this outdoors or in the bathtub is easiest. You can give your plants a shower at the same time to remove dust from the leaves.



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Fertilization:

Liquid fertilizers are the easiest to use and give the best results. Feed foliage plants with frequent (2 to 4 times a month), half strength applications during the spring and summer depending on how often you are watering. Feed less or not at all in fall and winter when lower temperatures and light levels slow plant growth. Blooming houseplants usually require more feeding. There are specific fertilizers for them such as African Violet food and Orchid food.

Repotting:

The best time to pot or repot your plants is in the spring when plants resume active growth. Indications for a need to repot are a constantly thirsty plant, roots are growing from the drainage hole, and the water runs through the pot too quickly. The new pot should only be 2 to 4 inches wider than the old one. A container that is too large will hold excess moisture in the soil. This can lead to root rot or an infestation of fungus gnat. Gravel or rock is not needed at the bottom of the container. It has been found that doing so actually inhibits complete drainage. Rather, a small screen, such as **Keeper Stopper**, placed over the drainage hole will hold soil in and keep bugs out. Choose a soil rich in organic matter such as **Sloat Organic Potting Soil**. Loosen the root ball and spread roots gently over a small hill of soil placed at the bottom of the container. Apply **Actinovate** around the roots according to directions. Plants treated with Actinovate are hardier, more vigorous, and develop a root system immune to soil fungi that cause root rot. Continue to fill in the sides with soil. Do not plant deeper than the current soil level. Provide enough room to give adequate water by leaving an inch of space from the soil level to the top of the pot.

Helpful Items:

Vinyl saucers, plant pallets, pot feet and Protecto Mats help protect carpeted or wood floors.

Hide the soil with decorative moss, rock, gravel or small bark.

For hanging plants, there are vinyl drip pans and fabric pot hangers.