



Bucks Country Gardens

Basic Houseplant Care

The basic care of all houseplants includes proper lighting, temperature, watering practices and general maintenance. The following paragraphed items will cover the basic guidelines for houseplant care:

LIGHT REQUIREMENTS

Each plant requires a certain amount of light for growing. We group light levels as the following:

- Direct Sun – the maximum light that can be provided to a specific plant. Its best location would be in an unblocked window facing south or east.
- Moderate Light – Some sunlight is needed for plant growth. A west window or slightly shaded south window will do.
- Diffused Light – A bright location without direct sun.
- Low (minimum) Light – This indicates that the plant is a shade-loving variety and requires minimal light levels.

Another source of light is also to be considered: ARTIFICIAL LIGHT. The most common artificial light source in the home is incandescent lighting, while most office environments provide fluorescent lighting.

- Incandescent Light – This type provides adequate light and also produces heat, which could damage the leaf surface if the plant is left too close to the light source. We recommend using incandescent GROW LIGHTS, which will be more beneficial to your plant.
- Fluorescent Light – Most commonly found in offices, this light is adequate for most plants (such as African Violets, Gloxinias, Episcias, ferns and foliage plants) but is not strong enough for the plant's growth. Our plant varieties are individually marked with their light requirement guidelines.

Please ask us for additional information concerning the light requirements and supplies needed for your plants.

TEMPERATURE

The temperature in which your plant lives in is a key to its health and success. Most plants must avoid drafty areas, while others may enjoy high humidity. Again, please check our information signs with each plant variety we offer.

WATERING

How you water your plant is the most important step in keeping it alive and well. Over watering kills plants just as much as underwatering. For healthy root growth, most soils should approach dryness before being watered – and most plants prefer warm water (about 70 degrees.) It is very important to have the water drain through the drainage holes to prevent mineral build-up in the potting media, and to drain the saucer of the excess water so that the soil does not soak it back up.

LEACHING

Leaching is a watering maintenance technique that removes mineral build-up in the potting media. This process should be performed every 2 or 3 months at the time the soil has approached dryness from its regular watering schedule. To leach your plant, first water it thoroughly. About 2 hours later water it again, allowing the water to drain through the pot. Repeat this step once more.

FERTILIZING

There are many different types of fertilizers on the market today. We recommend the water-soluble varieties (such as Peters) because they are easy to use and satisfy your plant's feeding requirements. (Follow the directions on the package for proper use.) For complete fertilization of the plant, allow the water/fertilizer mix to drain through the soil and out the drainage holes of the container.

DECORATIVE POTS, BASKETS AND CONTAINERS

Good drainage is the key to a happy plant. Most plant containers already have drainage holes at the bottom – this is a wise choice if you are selecting another container for your plant. If drainage holes are not present, we recommend filling the bottom third (or bottom quarter) of the container with broken clay pots or stones. This will provide adequate drainage of the excess water.

POTTING MIXES AND SOILS

There are many soils and potting medias available: all –purpose mixes as well as specialized soil mixes for specific plants. These soils will provide proper drainage and aeration qualities for your new plant.

You may also make up your own potting mix: Just add 1/3 perlite, 1/3 vermiculite and 1/3 peat moss. This mix will satisfy most plants needs.

REPOTTING GUIDELINES

The time to repot your plant is 1) when the plant's growth rate slows down considerably during the normal growing season. 2) When the soil dries rapidly and doesn't retain its moisture, and 3) when upon examining the root ball the roots are heavily matted and encircling the soil ball, and even growing through the drainage holes. There are several points to remember when repotting a plant:

- Remove some of the old soil and replace it with a fresh potting mix (as mentioned above.)
- If the plant is root-bound, slightly separate the roots by roughing-up the edges of the root fibers.
- Increase the pot size 1-2 inches larger than the old pot diameter.
- Remember to repot the plant at the same depth which it was previously potted.
- After repotting the plant, do not compact the potting mix – this will stop proper drainage through the soil mix.

When you have completed repotting your plant in a new container with a quality potting mix, water it thoroughly, and lower the level of light it receives for the next few days to get it established in its new environment.

CLEANING YOUR PLANT

Your plant's leaves will need a minor cleaning to remove dust and other particles that settle onto the plant's leaves. Using plain water or a leaf-cleaning product (such as Safer's leafclean & Luster, or Schultz's Instant Plant Shine) your plant's leaves will be flushed of dirt particles and will maintain a shiny, healthy disposition.

INSECTS AND DISEASE CONTROL

If your plant shows any sign of disease or insect damage, please call BUCKS COUNTRY GARDENS at once! Since each particular case is different, we'll discuss the problem with you and remedy a specific treatment to cure your ailing plant.

SUMMARY

By following these basic steps, your houseplant will grow to give your home beauty plus give you many years of enjoyment. Feel free to call us for any questions you may have regarding your flowering or tropical foliage. We're here to help.