



FACEBOOK LIVE SEMINAR

Tips for Healthy Houseplants

It's actually not that difficult to keep houseplants happy, but you do need to pay attention to their basic needs and take care of any potential problems right away. Here are some tips to help you have a green thumb indoors.

GET TO KNOW YOUR PLANT

Some plants require very little attention, while others need a bit more TLC. Certain plants such as tropical house plants need regular misting to boost humidity, others are sensitive to salts and chemicals in tap water. Reading care cards, doing research and asking our plant experts will help you get to know your plants better.

LOCATION

Know how much light is right. All plants require different amount of light. Some plants are adaptive and thrive in a myriad of light environments, while others are more temperamental and thrive best in high, direct light. Understanding which windows in your home will give your plant is a key component of being successful.

- East facing window - morning sun
- West facing window - lots of afternoon sun
- North facing window - not as much light
- South facing window - sun all day long

SIGNS OF INSUFFICIENT LIGHT

- Stretching - leaves begin to stretch towards the light (spindly leaves).
- Pale green color

SIGNS OF TOO MUCH LIGHT

- Brown edges on leaves
- Leaves closing inward

We recommend rotating plants often, so all foliage receives enough sunlight.

PLANT ACCLIMATION

- Plants will acclimate or adjust to their new home.
- Indoor plants are grown in greenhouses, so coming into the home will take some time to acclimate. Could take 6 months to a year.
- Leaf loss will occur or leaves may develop some spotting.
- Pay attention to drafts by doors or windows.
- Humidity is lower in the winter (fill a saucer with water and place the plant on top, consider a humidifier, or use a moisture meter).

WATERING

Overwatering is the most common reason plants fail – particularly in the winter. Overwatering can cause browning of leaves, fungus, gnats, and dropping of leaves.

- Wait to water your houseplants until they become dry. Check your soil. The best tool is your finger. If the soil is dry from the tip of your finger to your first knuckle, it's time to water.
- All plants require different watering requirements, you may not have them all on the same schedule
- Always water the soil not the leaves
- Most like a wet/dry cycle – water the plant really well and let it dry out between waterings

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FEEDING HOUSEPLANTS

Feeding is essential to keeping plants healthy. Unlike an outdoor plant, where nature provides rain and plants can send new roots searching for food, the nutrients available to a houseplant are limited by the amount of soil in the pot and whatever else you give it as a supplement.

FERTILIZERS

- **McDonald Greenleaf** – both organic and traditional. Fertilize 2-3 times a year.
- **Schultz All Purpose Liquid Plant Food** - Fertilize more often. About every 3rd or 4th watering.
- **Superthrive** - Used to help plants that are struggling.
- **Bio-Tone Starter Plus** - all natural plant food that help plants grow quickly, withstand environmental stress, promote deeper root systems, encourage better blooms, and improve soil structure.

TIP: Cleaning the leaves of dust will help the plant with photosynthesis. Use a leaf shine product if needed.

STEPS TO REPOTTING HOUSEPLANTS:

It's best to repot houseplants in the spring and summer months when plants are actively growing.

1. Select your new container - Choose a clean, new pot that is no more than two-inches in diameter larger than your plant's old home. Too much space can slow growth and may lead to root rot.

TIP: If your container doesn't have a drain hole, place your plant in an inexpensive, plastic pot with a drain hole. Simply insert the plastic pot into your new container. The new container will act as the saucer and catch water.

2. Choose a good, all-purpose potting soil.

A good potting soil helps the plant to retain moisture, provide enough air for growing roots to be able to breath and not rot, and supports your plant by providing anchorage for the roots.

McDonald Potting Soil is an all-purpose soil specifically formulated for Hampton Roads and is available in both traditional and organic formulas.

3. Fill the bottom of the new pot with one-to-two inches of potting soil and smooth out.
4. Carefully remove the plant from the old pot.
5. Gently loosen-up the plant's root ball.
6. Place the plant into the new pot and fill in around the plant with potting soil.

TIP: Lightly packing the soil around the plant will help to prevent air pockets and will also help to establish a good root to soil connection.

7. Apply approximately 2 tablespoons of a good all-purpose fertilizer.

After repotting, your plant should be happy and healthy for the next one-to-two years, as long as you give it the light required and continue to feed and water according to its specific needs.

INSECT AND DISEASE ISSUES

Keep an eye out for pests. The sooner you discover pests, the easier it is to get under control, so check your plants often. They usually will attack the new growth and also hide on the underside of the leaves and along the stem.

continued on next page

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Insects tend to be more of a problem for indoor plants (aphids, mealybug, scale, fungus gnats, spider mites). Typically, indoor houseplants don't have as many fungus issues, but can occur, so check your plants regularly.

TREATMENTS

- **Systemic Insect Granulars (traditional)** - Provide effective, long lasting insect control for up to 8 weeks. Sprinkle over top of soil. Granulars are absorbed up into the plant and kill chewing insects as they eat the leaves.
- **Fertilome Triple Action (organic)** - Contains neem oil. An easy to use broad spectrum Fungicide/ Insecticide/ Miticide.
- **Natural Guard Spinosad Soap (organic)** - Combination of potassium salts of fatty acid and spinosad, which effectively control foliage-feeding pests.
- **Neem Oil (organic)** - Fungicide/Insecticide/ Miticide. Works by suffocating insects.

Quarantine insect infested or diseased plants from healthy plants to prevent from spreading.

Moving plants outdoors during the summer months can cause more issues and may expose healthy plants to diseases outdoors.

FAVORITE PLANTS

Bromeliads - Are available in an array of colors and textures and foliage in red, green, purple, orange, yellow, banded, stripes, and spots. Prefer well-lit, bright windowsills, but not direct sunlight. A south, west, or east-facing window is ideal. Keep the soil evenly moist.

Kalanchoe - Succulent type plant that is grown in a wide range of colors; most of them vibrant hues like yellow, pink, magenta, orange and red. Requires medium to high light and moderate watering.

Pothos - One of the easiest houseplants to grow. Features pointed, heart-shaped green leaves, sometimes variegated with white, yellow, or pale green. Prefers bright, indirect light, and a wet/dry watering cycle.

Philodendron - Heart-shape leaves that form on slender, flexible stems. Prefers bright, indirect sunlight, and a wet/dry watering cycle.

Snake Plant (sanseveri/Mother-in-Law's Tongue) - A tough plant with heavy, sword-like leaves that can grow up to 4-feet in height. Prefers moderate to bright light. Water once every 7 - 10 days thoroughly, allowing the soil to dry in between waterings.

Cactus/Succulents - One of the most versatile plants on the globe. These plants have shallow roots and can survive without a great deal of water or care and thrive in drought-like conditions. Available in a variety of shapes and colors with or without blooms.

Chinese Evergreen (aglonemia) - Loved for their big, beautiful, colorful leaves and easy care, these plants are often suggested for people who think they don't have a green thumb. Their low-maintenance requirements and their ability to adapt to a variety of conditions makes them great for houseplant beginners.

continued on next page

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Ferns - Feature lush green fronds all year round with lots of different varieties to choose from. Most ferns grow best in medium light, but shielded from direct sun. Keep the soil moist, but not wet or soggy. Their love of moist air makes ferns the perfect houseplants for bright bathrooms or kitchens.

Renegade Shefflera - Features long, shiny, oval green leaves that droop gracefully from a central stalk. Prefers bright, indirect light and a wet/dry watering cycle.

Peace Lilies - Bears broad, dark green leaves and white calla-like flowers. Prefers bright, indirect light and evenly moist, well-drained soil.

Fiddle Leaf Fig - A wildly popular houseplant featuring large, heavily veined, violin-shaped leaves that grow upright on a tall plant. Fiddle Leafs can be a little finicky, so be sure to give it the light required and continue to feed and water according to its specific needs. Prefers medium light and a wet/dry watering cycle.

Cordyline - Features leathery-like leaves shaped like a spear or lance with a variety of coloring including green, red, yellow, white, purple, and purplish-red. Prefers bright light but avoid direct sunlight. Follow a wet/dry watering cycle.

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