

# Squak Mt Nursery's Houseplant Pro Tips

## Why invest in houseplants:

- \*Greenery adds beauty to your home.
- \*Plants in your workspace help calm your mind and sharpen your focus.
- \*Plants help you breathe easier: plants release moisture and oxygen and remove toxins from the air.

## Indoor light explained

- \*Low Light does not mean NO light!  
Ideal placement: North window, or at least 6 feet away from an Eastern window
- \*Bright indirect Light – East window or about 6 feet away from a South facing window
- \*Bright Light – South facing window, or about 4 feet away from a western window

**Pro Tip** – Use the “White Paper Test” to determine how much light your plant is getting. Place a sheet of plain white paper horizontally at the same level as your plant leaves. Hover your hand about 12” above the paper and observe the shadow.

- Sharp, crisp shadow – Bright light
- Shadow is visible but the edges are fuzzy – Indirect light
- Shadow is faint with no visible edges – low light

## Watering is both science and art

- \*Incorrect watering is the number one cause of houseplant decline
  - \*The Dos and Don'ts:
    - DON'T water on a strict schedule
    - DO get into the habit of regularly checking your plant's soil
    - DO change watering practices seasonally
    - DO keep in mind how the plant's container impacts water retention
    - DON'T water at night – morning is best
    - DO water deeply and less frequently
    - DON'T let your plant sit in water for an extended period of time
    - DO understand your plant's water needs
- Example: Maidenhair ferns need constant moisture; ZZ plants prefer to be dry

**Pro Tip** – Insert a pencil eraser 2” into the soil. If the eraser comes out clean, the soil is dry.

- \*Tap water vs. rain or distilled water  
Some plants are sensitive to fluoride in the water:  
Marantas, Calatheas, Chlorophytums, Dracenas

## Do my houseplants need fertilizer?

- Many houseplants will benefit from a dose of well-timed, appropriate fertilizer
- The Dos and Don'ts:
  - DON'T fertilize a plant that relies on day light during the winter months

DON'T fertilize a dry or stressed plant  
DO understand your plant's fertilizer requirements. Is it a heavy feeder?  
DO look at the NPK amount on your chosen fertilizer  
DON'T overfertilize your plant – watch for salt build up on the soil or brown tips  
DON'T fertilize these plants: dracaenas, succulents planted without drainage, marantas and asparagus ferns

### Signs your plants need repotting:

Roots emerging from the bottom of the container  
Plant needs water more often  
Yellowing leaves with green veins  
Soil appears broken down  
Plant looks too big for the pot  
The Do's and Don'ts of repotting

DO repot your plants at the beginning of the growing season (March)  
DON'T repot your plants in the late fall or early winter  
DO consider the type of container to best match your plant  
DON'T repot the plant into a pot larger than 2" of the current pot  
DO consider the type of growing medium best suited to your plant  
DO root prune if necessary (circling roots)

### Trouble Shooting

#### Yellow Leaves

Yellowing leaves that curl inward and have crispy tips signal a need for more water  
Leaves that are bright yellow, or yellow fading to green are overwatered plants  
Irregular yellowing and leaf deformities signal nutrient deficiencies

### Little Buggers

Mealy bugs are the most common houseplant pest; aphids show up indoors too.

Wash the plant in the sink or shower  
Use a Q-tip with alcohol for mealy bugs; dish soap solution for aphids  
Correct plant culture

Fungus Gnats – a total nuisance

Stir the top inch of the soil with a chop stick  
Use yellow sticky traps  
Carnivorous plants  
Correct the culture – they love wet soil

### Choosing your houseplant: Are you a neglecter or a nurturer?

Staff favorite "Neglecter Plants"

Palms - low to indirect light  
Aglaonema - low to indirect light Tip: the darker the leaf, the lower the light  
Zamioculcus (ZZ Plant) - Low light  
Asplenium (bird's nest fern) – indirect light  
Sansevieria – indirect to bright light  
Epipremnum (pothos) – indirect light  
Ctenetthe – bright light  
Hoya – bright light

Staff favorite “Nurturer Plants”

- Spathiphyllum (peace lily) – low light
- Calatheas – low to indirect light
- Dracenas – indirect light
- Philodendrons – indirect light
- Ficus – high light
- Tillandsia – indirect light
- Nepenthes – bright light
- Jasmine – bright light
- Pilea – indirect light
- Chlorophyllum (spider plant) – indirect light

ASPCA list of pet safe plants:

- Pilea
- Peperomia
- Palms: Chamaedorea (Parlor) and Howea (Kentia)
- Boston fern
- Calathea
- Maranta
- Chlorophyllum (Spider)
- Hoya
- Haworthia