

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

Signs your plant needs **more light**:

- Spindly growth that “reaches” for a light source
- Increasing length between growth nodes or petioles
- Variegated plants become increasingly all green
- Leaves turn yellow and then fall off

Signs your plant is getting **too much light**:

- Foliage color fades out
- Brown patches on leaf

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.

These plants prefer rain or distilled 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