



HOME & GARDEN

Home and Garden information center • 12005 Homewood Road • Ellicott City, MD 21042 • 1-800-342-2507

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Seasonal and Indoor Plants Tips

- You may notice leaf yellowing and leaf drop on some of your houseplants. This is usually a result of low light conditions or over-watering. Most houseplants should be watered only when the top of the growing medium begins to dry out. To help prevent over watering, don't use real garden soil in a houseplant pot. It does not drain properly in a pot. Use a lightweight, well-drained "soil-less" potting mixes containing peat moss, perlite, or bark. Many of these mixes also contain slow release fertilizers that will meet a houseplant's nutritional requirements for 2-3 months.
- A variety of pests may attack houseplants. You may notice honeydew, which is a sticky plant sap product secreted by sucking insects such as aphids, brown soft scale and mealy bugs. Plants commonly affected are ficus, schefflera and jade plants. The honeydew is often first noticed as a sticky floor or carpeting under a plant.
- Mealy bugs, appear as white fluffy masses on infested plants. They can be controlled by swabbing them with rubbing alcohol or taking plants outside and spraying with a labeled horticultural oil. However, don't do this on a very cold day, or your plants will be damaged.
- Several species of soft scale insects appear as brown bumps on leaves and stems and can be controlled with a light horticultural oil labeled for houseplants.
- Mealy bugs and scales often become an overwhelming problem and it is best to discard extremely infested plants before the pests spread to your other plants.
- Raising humidity levels around plants and reducing dust levels can control spider mites. Repeated washing of the leaves with water will help in reducing a spider mite problem.
- Fungus gnats are small, harmless black flies that hover around many houseplants. They breed in and feed in overly wet growing media. Severe infestations result in root rots and size reduction. They can be prevented by being careful not to over-water houseplants. Growing media should be allowed to dry out before watering again.

Have a pest or gardening question?
Call The Home and Garden Information Center
1-800-342-2507
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