



Redding Garden Club

Garden Tips

Indoor Gardening

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Itching to get back to your garden? Stretch your gardening muscles by tending to your houseplants. Their verdant vitality offers relief from the gray, dormant world outside, not to mention cleaning the air in your home. To keep them at their best:

Choose the best window for each plant. North windows receive only diffuse light and remain cool. They are best for low-light plants such as ferns, philodendrons, ivies and Chinese evergreens.

South windows receive the strongest light and heat up the most during the day. Try geraniums, bougainvillea, calla lilies here and don't let them dry out.

Western exposure also gets bright and hot. Gloxinia, African Violets and Hoya are good candidates. Eastern light is milder and does not heat up the window area. Gardenias, Cyclamen and Begonias will appreciate this.

Disregard the instructions on plant food labels. Even indoor plants know it is winter because of the length and strength of daylight reaching them. They are resting now and need less water and nutrients. Overfeeding can cause a harmful build-up of salts in the potting soil which can burn the plant's roots. Look for a white crust on the surface of the soil and brown edges on the leaves. Soak the entire pot in water one or more times to eliminate the build-up. And wait till spring approaches, with longer days, before feeding your plants again.

Clean the foliage. The dry air of a heated house can coat the leaves with dust, discouraging respiration and decreasing the plant's ability to absorb the already limited light. Wiping leaves with a damp cloth periodically will refresh houseplants and may also remove insects.

If you do find pests, such as aphids, mealybugs, scale, whiteflies, isolate the infected plant and spray it thoroughly with Insecticidal Soap. This eco-friendly treatment is very effective, though you may need to repeat the spraying once or twice for 100% control.

Raise humidity around plants by misting or setting plants on trays filled with pebbles and water.