

### Green your home with Indoor Plants

**Indoor plants in the home or office act like a filter, taking in the stale air through the leaves and leaving clean fresh oxygen. They bring the outdoors into the home.**

**Light and temperature:** These are vital elements for maintaining good growth. Different varieties require varying levels of light. The darker the leaf the lower the level of light they require whereas variegated leaves require a high level of good light. All plants need to be kept out of draughts. In winter this includes cold windows, or heat from ducted heating systems. In summer direct draughts from air conditioners can be equally damaging. Direct sunlight through glass can cause severe burning. Turn plants weekly for even growth. Dust can inhibit growth by stopping the leaves breathing; wipe both sides of the leaves with a damp cloth, **do not** use oil-based leaf shine products.

**Watering:** **80% of indoor plants are killed with overwatering.** Excessive moisture causes the potting mix to sour and roots to rot. The most frequent cause is the pot sitting in a saucer full of water. **Always drain the saucer after watering** or fill the saucer with pebbles and place the container on the top of the pebbles. This way the roots of the plant will not be in water and the excess water in the saucer provides valuable humidity for the plant. It is equally important that the plant does not dry out. Most overwatering occurs in winter. In a non centrally heated house water the plants approximately every 7-10 days. With winter central heating and in summer water about every four to five days. Should the mix completely dry out and if the container is not too large, immerse the whole container in water (say in the laundry tub) to just below the top of the pot. Leave only for about 15 minutes and then allow to drain and place into a dry saucer. Once the soil has moistened remove immediately from immersion.

**Feeding:** Regular feeding of indoor plants is vital. This is one of the most neglected aspects of indoor plants. Regular watering, particularly in the summer months and main growing season causes many of the nutrients to leach out of the potting mix. In winter keep feeding to a minimum. In spring and summer feed regularly once a month. Foliage only plants, such as Aspidistra, prefer a plant nutrient such as **Multicrop Seaweed Plant Nutrient**. Whilst flowering plants, for example Impatiens and Begonias, prefer a higher potassium plant food.

**Re-potting:** Indoor plants can quickly become root-bound. Plants that are root-bound will have very little potting mix to retain water and nutrients. Re-pot in the spring using premium grade potting mix. Re-pot into a pot only one size larger. Potting into too large a container may cause the potting mix to sour before sufficient root development can penetrate the new mix. For plants such as ferns, which require a high humus content [as growing in the wild], add extra peat moss (20-30%) to the potting mix. Plants such as cactus prefer a drier mix by adding coarse river sand instead of peat moss to the mix.

**Pests & diseases:** There are not many problems with indoor plants. It is best to take a sample of the problem to your local garden centre for advice. For most pests such as mites, aphids and scale use **Multicrop EcoPest**.

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