

# Basic Houseplant Care

*A general guide to caring for most indoor plants*



When choosing a houseplant, first determine what type of light you have. Does the light change throughout the day, or does the light change with the seasons? Make sure the area gets enough light for the plant you've chosen.

## Types of Light

- **High Light** - Provide full, direct sunlight for 3 to 6 hours or bright, indirect light for 6 to 8 hours a day.
- **Medium Light** - Provide full, direct morning sunlight for 2 to 4 hours or bright, indirect sunlight for 4 to 6 hours.
- **Low Light** - Provide diffused, indirect sunlight for 3 to 4 hours or more.
- **"No" Light** - Provide diffused, indirect light for 3 hours or less.
- **Tip:** If you can read this paper in the location where the plant will be located without turning on a light, it is a low light location. If you have to turn on a light to read, then it is considered a "no" light location.



**"No" Light**

3 hours or fewer  
indirect sunlight



**Low Light**

3-4 hours+  
indirect sunlight



**Medium Light**

4-6 hours indirect or 2-4  
direct morning sun



**Bright Light**

3-6 hours direct sun  
or 6-8 bright & indirect

## Temperature

Get to know the temperature range of your space. Start with a regular thermometer placed in or near a window that you'd like to use for growing plants. Be sure to check the thermometer at various points throughout the day and record a minimum and maximum temperature. Be mindful that this will also vary depending on the season.

Once you've established your average temperature range, you can begin researching plants that might do well in your home's conditions. Use this research to determine whether or not you will be able to replicate a plant's native climate with relative ease. The optimal growth range for most (but not all) indoor plants will fall between 50 and 80° F.

Another thing to keep in mind is that plants prefer variation between daytime and nighttime temperatures. Some plants won't flower without a significant nighttime temperature drop. Again, it's best to research plants you're interested in and compare to your growing conditions and minimum and maximum temperatures.

## Humidity

Some houseplants require levels of humidity uncommon in the average indoor space, especially in the winter

months when the air is particularly dry. Create a pebble tray by adding a layer of gravel or small rocks to a tray or saucer, and filling with enough water that the rocks are all sitting in the water, but not entirely submerged. Place the plant on top of the rocks, ensuring that it doesn't sit directly in the water. When the water in the tray evaporates it will create an aura of humidity around the plant. Misting occasionally may also help, but isn't a great substitute for adequate humidity.

## Watering

- **Dry plants:** Cactus and succulent soil should be allowed to dry thoroughly before watering. Check the soil for moisture before you water, and reduce watering frequency in the winter.
- **Moist/dry plants:** Many houseplants belong in this group. Water thoroughly and allow the top third of the soil to dry before watering again. This surface drying is especially important during the resting period from fall until spring. During the sunny summer months, check soil more frequently.
- **Moist at all times plants:** Soil should be kept moist, but not soggy, at all times. Water thoroughly when the soil surface becomes dry, but not so frequently that the soil is constantly saturated.
- **Wet at all times plants:** Very few indoor plants belong in this group. This includes water plants like Papyrus and Rushes. Water thoroughly and frequently enough to keep the soil wet at all times.
- **Tip:** Roots need air as well as water, and saturated soil does not allow much air flow. Don't let the roots/pot sit in water for more than a couple of hours. Drain excess water from the tray. Use quality potting mix that is suited to your individual plant's moisture retention needs.

## Fertilizer

During active growth periods, generally spring and summer months, feed with a fertilizer that is suited to your plant at half the strength recommended by the manufacturer. Fertilizer requirements vary by plant and excess fertilizer can do serious damage, so it's best to research your plant's typical feeding schedule. Feed less often in the winter when plants are mostly dormant.

## Repotting

It's not necessary to repot a plant immediately after purchase. If your plant begins to dry out quickly, or if the pot is cracked by the roots' expansion, repot your plant into a pot that is just one size bigger (2" larger in diameter at the most.) Repotting plants can put them under stress, so be sure that doing so is necessary for the health of the plant.

**For More  
Information**



[Indoor Plant Video Playlist](#)  
[Tagawa Gardens YouTube](#)

*\*Link description is clickable. For hard copies, please scan the QR codes with your phone's camera to be taken to the destination.*