



## Houseplant House Call

Winter can be hard on your houseplants. We are asking them to cope with less light, drier air plus pests that find your house as cozy in winter as you do! Here is a checklist from the experts at Plant Land to help your plants get through the winter days.



**Leaves turning yellow:** In plants less than two years old: Sometimes yellowing leaves are a sign of too much water. Limp leaves can mean the same thing. Many houseplants are semi-dormant over winter and don't need as much water as they do in the longer growing days of summer. Be sure to poke a finger at least up to the first joint in the soil before watering. Some plants might need water and some plants might not. Clip off yellow leaves (they won't return to green) and allow plants to dry out to see if the problem goes away.



**In older plants:** Yellowing leaves can be a sign of iron deficiency which in turn can be a sign that your plant needs repotting. We don't always have to repot to bigger pots but we do have to replenish soil periodically. And if you are not feeding your houseplants, now is the time to start. Remember to reduce feeding by half in winter when plants are semi-dormant.

**Leaves turning brown and dry:** In plants less than two years old: In new plants, this can be a symptom of too little moisture, even though the plant is well watered. Fine leafed plants often need more moisture in the air than our winter heated houses can provide. Clean out dry leaves and set your plant on a pebble filled saucer, filled with water. The water will evaporate up through the leaves, giving the plant its own moist microclimate. Keep the saucer full all the time.

**In older plants:** Dried leaves can be a sign of a pot bound plant. In this case, repotting to a larger container can help. Pay attention to your plants; pot bound plants often first show dead leaf tips before they reach full distress. Always take time to groom your houseplants and clip brown leaves off. Doing so can encourage new growth once your plant is happy with its growing conditions again.

**Dusty plants:** For plants of all ages: Many household heating systems, combined with closed houses, coat everything including plants with dust in winter. Clogged stomata, that is what plant pores are called, prevent plants from transpiring, in other words, breathing. Use a moist, soft cloth to clean large leaves. Put smaller leafed plants in the sink and gently spray them clean. Don't worry about formulas you can find on line for cleaning plants; plain old water does just fine. Be sure to get both the tops and undersides of all the leaves clean.



**Pests:** For plants of all ages: White fuzz means mealy bugs. Wipe them away with rubbing alcohol on a cotton swab. Tiny brown attached growths are scale. Pinch off leaves or cut off stems that have scale. Webs or red dots are signs of spider mites. Give the plants a cold water rinse in the sink.

Try to look at your plants often to catch pests before they become critical problems. Plant Land's experts can help you with products to treat serious infestations but catching them early is the best thing to do.

**Vacation Hydration:** If you are going away for a week or less, don't worry about having someone come in to water houseplants. You can set your plants up to make it without additional attention. If your trip is less than three days, simply give everyone a good watering, including misting, before you leave.

If your trip is three to seven days, arrange plants that prefer low light in the bathtub or laundry sink. Put them together as snugly as you can. Crumple sheets of newspaper and tuck them in tightly among the plant containers. Wet the newspaper, allowing a small amount of water to pool in the tub or sink. Give the plants a good misting before you leave and they will be content for up to seven days.

For plants that need good light, use a plastic storage tub to set up the same arrangement where there is better light. Avoid sites with direct sunlight as it can dry everything out too fast.

If you are leaving for longer than seven days but less than twenty-one, you can set up the above arrangement and ask someone to come in and replenish the water for you once a week. Don't leave plants crowded in a container for longer than twenty-one days (three weeks). Plants may suffer damage from being too packed in together for too long.



All year long, in every season you will find Plant Land's greenhouses full of houseplants. We carry all kinds and in all sizes. Plus we have all the supplies and expertise you need to have healthy, happy houseplants including pretty pots in every size.