



Riverview Garden Club Helpful Hints



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Indoor plants can have a tough time surviving winter, but there's a lot you can do to help them make it through the winter in the best of health.

Almost all houseplants go into hibernation over the winter; therefore, they don't need as much water. Watering them at summer rates can increase their development of rot or disease. When in doubt, check to see if the soil is moist about an inch below the surface. If you go on vacation for two weeks or more, you can break the low water rule and give your houseplants an extra soaking so they stay healthy. Similar to water, don't over fertilize your plants. If your plants are healthy, skip fertilizing altogether. You can dilute fertilizer by 50 percent before applying and observe to see results.

Repotting is tough on plants and will need all their strength in the winter. Hold off on repotting window plants until spring.

Dusty leaves on plants can encourage disease and prevent plants from absorbing sunlight. Lightly brush off the leaves every month or so.

If you want to create a collection of useful herbs or flowering plants in winter, create a window box to display them and give them plenty of light. Choose hardy species which can be moved outside in the spring. Avoid drafts or breezes which can chill them and don't crack open windows near plants. The air near windows can grow very cold when the temperature outside drops at night. Move houseplants off the windowsill if it looks like it will freeze.

A humidifier can add a little more moisture in dry winter air which may help keep more delicate plant leaves from browning out. Another way to add humidity is to group plants requiring similar water conditions together or place a plant on a tray of pebbles covered with water.

Winter pests can be problematic for window plants. They can easily spread throughout the house and do a lot of damage. Keep houseplants clean, watch for pests like mites and if you spot a problem, isolate the plant and treat it immediately.

While many homeowners worry about plants freezing in winter, remember to be careful of the heat by avoiding putting plants by heaters or fireplaces where they may dry out.

Enjoy your houseplants as they provide oxygen for us, give us a sense of calm, and keeps us involved in gardening.



--Sandy