

Foliage Plant Care

Does your home seem bare after the holidays? January is one of the top sales months for indoor foliage plants. With that in mind, here are a few tips for caring for your houseplants.

Winter is a difficult time for houseplants. Lighting is a critical factor, and in Kansas most homes have a light deficiency during the winter months. It is best to place most plants in a south window to maximize the amount of light that they are exposed to. Make sure that the windows are clean to allow in the most light. Clean leaf surfaces, as leaves tend to become dust collectors over time.

Most plants prefer temperatures in the 65°-75°F range. Temperatures below 50°F will result in chilling damage to foliage plants. Avoid placing plants near heating registers or on top of the television, as the plants will dry out. As a general rule-of-thumb, prevent placing your plants in temperature extremes.

Most plants do not need high humidity (exception: African violets and orchids), but will benefit from some humidity. There are several ways to increase the humidity in a home. Using a room humidifier is the easiest way. Another way is to simply group plants together, creating a small microclimate, keeping humidity levels higher. Misting usually doesn't benefit the plant, as it is difficult to do it frequently enough and it can result in salt build-up on the foliage unless you use distilled water.

Fertilize your houseplants with ½ the strength recommended on the fertilizer container from October through March. We want to encourage healthy plants not growth during these months. Water when the soil is dry to touch. Do not re-pot or cut back

plants during the winter, as this tends to encourage growth when light levels aren't adequate to support that growth.

With a little care, foliage plants can spruce up your home during the gloomy winter months.

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