

Tropical Plant & Cacti Care



This caresheet is designed to help you care for all of your indoor plants. It's separated into 3 categories, "High Light", "Medium-low Light" & "Cacti & Succulents". Specific needs are listed for tropical plants which require a little extra maintenance. If your plant is not listed here & you want to know which category it falls under, please ask a **GARDENWORKS** staff member. We'll make sure you have all the necessary lighting conditions, fertilizer & other specific care tips before you go home with your new houseplant.

High-light House Plants

(BRIGHT, INDIRECT OR FILTERED LIGHT)

LOCATION: Position in a bright room away from direct light & provide consistently warm room temperatures (minimum 18°C in winter)

FERTILIZER: Use **GARDENWORKS** 20-20-20 at the recommended rate during the growing season (spring until mid-fall).

WATERING: Allow the soil to dry completely between waterings.

GROOMING: Control shape & height by pinching new growth.

COMMON PROBLEMS

- **LEAF LOSS** May be caused by over-watering, not enough light, cold temperatures, or dry soil.
- **BROWN, DRY LEAVES** Caused by direct exposure to the sun, or under watering.
- **PALE COLOUR** Insufficient light or fertilizer.

Common "High-light" Plants & Their Particular Growing Needs

Araucaria heterophylla (Norfolk Island Pine) Flourishes in cool temperatures and high lights. Requires high humidity best obtained through regular misting. Hot dry air or dry soil will cause leaves to drop, loss of lower branches and possibly a spider mite infestation. Feed only every 3-4 months.

Codiaeum (Croton) Provide adequate humidity by regular misting. Wash leaves regularly. Subject to spider mite.

Coffea arabica (Coffee) Easy to grow, but must be protected from draughts & the soil must never be allowed to dry out. Mist occasionally & provide average temperatures year round.

Columnea (Gold Fish) Mist frequently & keep the soil consistently moist during the growing season but allow it to dry during the winter. Boytritis will result from over watering. Trim after it finishes flowering.

Dizygotheca (False Aralia) Keep the soil consistently moist but not soggy. Mist regularly.

Ferns Requires good indirect light. Keep soil consistently moist but not soggy. Mist frequently & repot yearly in spring.

Ficus benamina (Weeping Fig) Leaf loss is common & can simply be due to a change in the environment. Avoid frequent repotting.

Ficus elastica (Rubber Tree) Biggest danger is over watering. Wash leaves with a damp cloth regularly.

Ficus pumila (Creeping Fig) Needs regular misting & consistently moist but not soggy soil.

Gynura (Velvet Plant) Some direct sunlight is beneficial & mist occasionally. Yellow dandelion like flowers are produced in spring & are best removed at the bud stage since their aroma is offensive.

Hedera helix (Ivy) Needs bright winter conditions but protect it from the direct sun in summer. Suffers in hot dry conditions, so keep compost consistently moist – never allow it to dry out. Mist frequently in summer & occasionally rinse leaves.

Podocarpus (Buddhist Pine) Requires some direct sun & occasional misting. Prune to maintain bushiness.

Polyscias (Ming Aralia, Dinner Plate Aralia) Will drop leaves if conditions are unfavourable. Keep warm in winter & provide even moisture levels. Mist frequently to provide high humidity.

Schefflera (Umbrella Tree) Easy to grow, needs frequent misting. Repot in spring approximately every 2 years.

Yucca Provide as much light as possible. Requires no misting. Needs cool winter temperatures.



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Medium to Low-light House Plants

LOCATION: Position near an east or north facing window and provide average to warm room temperatures (16°C night and 18-20° day)

WATERING: Water thoroughly during the growing season and allow the soil to dry slightly between waterings. Reduce watering in winter. (Exceptions are noted below)

FERTILIZER: Feed with GARDENWORKS 20-20-20 mixed at the recommended rate during the growing season.

COMMON PROBLEMS

- **BROWN LEAF TIPS/YELLOW EDGES ON LEAVES** Caused by cold draughts, dry air or under watering.
- **SOFT CURLED, WILTING YELLOW OR BROW LEAVES/ROTTING STEMS** The temperature may be too cold or possible overwatering.
- **SUDDEN DEATH** May be caused by the winter cold
- **LEGGY, SMALL PALE LEAVES** Too little light.

Common “medium to Low-light” Plants & Their Particular Growing Needs

Aglaonema (Chinese Evergreen) Only the plain green varieties thrive in low light levels. All others require medium light. Provide high humidity with regular misting. Plant in a shallow pot & protect from draughts. Needs repotting approximately every 3 years.

Cissus rhombifolia (Grape Ivy) Extremely tolerant of poor conditions but benefits from occasional misting. Great in a hanging basket or staked on a trellis.

Dieffenbachia (Dumb Cane) Provide high humidity with regular misting and wash dusty leaves with a damp cloth. Needs yearly repotting. If leggy & unattractive, cut the cane down to a 4” stump, which will resprout and produce a new plant. The crown can be rooted.

Draceana (marginata, demeris, reflexa) Requires consistently moist, (not soggy) soil & frequent misting. Repot every 2 years. Yellowing & dropping of lower leaves is natural.

Fittonia (Nerve Plant) Water well during growth periods, & mist frequently. Makes a good terrarium specimen.

Maranta (Prayer Plant) Colour fades in bright light. Keep consistently moist & mist regularly.

Monstera (Split Leaf Philodendron, Swiss Cheese) Benefits from occasional misting. Wash dusty leaves with a damp cloth & transplant approximately every 2 years.

Palms (Areca, Parlour, Pygmy, Kentia) Needs cool winters & moist summers. Keep soil consistently moist but not soggy & protect from draughts. Mist regularly.

Sansevieria (Snake Plant, Mother-in-Laws Tongue) Requires low light & moderate watering during the growing season. Do not mist. Allow the plant to become pot bound. Brown patches on leaves are a common problem but the cause is unknown.

Scindapsus (Pothos: Golden, Marble Queen, Silver Vine) Water liberally during the growing season, sparingly in winter. Allow the soil to dry between waterings. Good trailer or climber.

Cacti & Succulent Plants

There are more than 2,000 species of Cacti, some of which are succulents. They are extremely tolerant plants, but need highly porous soil to do well. Although they are fairly easy-to grow in a dry soil, cacti should be watered and fed occasionally. Here are some simple growing tips.

LOCATION: Place in a bright, indirectly lit south, east, or west window.

WATERING: Water your cacti thoroughly, allow soil to dry for a few weeks between waterings. Cut watering back in the winter to once every month or 2. Succulents should be watered as soon as the soil is dry & should be watered all year long.

TEMPERATURE: Keep your cacti at a temperature of 4-7°C at night, 14-17°C during the day to set flower buds; 9-12°C at night & 17-19°C during the day at other times. Succulents should be kept at 9-11°C at night & 15-17°C during the day.

GROOMING: None necessary. Repot only when essential. Use a shallow pot rather than a deep one.

COMMON PROBLEMS

- **WILTED DISCOLOURED LEAVES** Too much watering. This happens in particularly in winter.
- **ROOT ROT** caused by “soggy soil” with either poor drainage or excessive watering.
- **STEM & LEAF ROT** May be caused by cool, damp air.
- **BROWN DRY SPOTS** Underwatering
- **NO BLOOMS** Light is too low

FERTILIZER: Use a low nitrogen fertilizer. Cacti should be fed once a month during the growing season (early-spring to mid-autumn). Succulents need to be fed only 3 times a year (spring, midsummer, & early fall).

