

Houseplant Care in the Winter Months
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I love my houseplants, and especially enjoy having something green and pretty in my home during the darker, shorter days of winter. Houseplants in our homes clean and increase the amount of oxygen in the air. Studies have also shown a connection between plants and an elevation in mood, health, healing, and productivity. Wow!

With benefits like these, we want to keep our houseplants in tip top condition throughout the year. Temperature changes and reduced daylight during the winter months present challenges to our houseplant health. Here are some hints to help your houseplants through this time.

1. Provide adequate light, and rotate plants as needed. The amount of light that homes get during the winter months is short. Be prepared to move your plants to windows and areas that get light during winter. East-facing windows are ideal. Make sure that the windows are cleaned off inside and outside for maximum light. Also, clean off any dust that has gathered on the leaves so that they can absorb the light better. If the light source is coming from one side, then rotate the houseplants every couple of weeks.
2. Pay attention to watering and humidity. You may need to alter your watering schedule. Not only should plants need less water when it comes to frequency, but you may need to cut back on the volume of water also. In addition, use room temperature water. Houseplants are resting at this time and don't appreciate the shock of ice-cold water! Your plants may need a humidity boost at this time as well. You can raise the humidity by misting or spraying the air around your plants once or twice a week in the morning.
3. Watch the temperature. Keep your houseplants away from direct heat sources like vents or standing heaters, and don't put them right next to working fireplaces. Your plants won't like cold drafts either, so if you have plants near any doors that open regularly, move them. This goes for putting them too close to windows if the glass is cold.
4. Respect the dormancy period. Houseplants rest at this time and most go dormant or semi-dormant. They don't need or want to be fed. Hold off on fertilizing until the weather warms and the days get longer. Also hold off on repotting or transplanting your houseplants in winter. Just like fertilizing, spring, summer, and even early fall are more appropriate times to repot.

These tips should help your houseplants thrive this winter. Oh, and it doesn't hurt to talk to them once in a while. I do, every time I water.

Master Gardener classes are offered monthly throughout the county. You can find our class schedule at: http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu/Public_Education_Classes/?calendar=yes&g=56698, and recorded classes on many gardening topics here: http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu/Public_Education/Classes/

The Sherwood Demonstration Garden is open through winter with limited hours. Please check our website for further information about activities at the Sherwood Demonstration Garden at: http://ucanr.edu/sites/EDC_Master_Gardeners/Demonstration_Garden/

Have a gardening question? Master Gardeners are working hard to answer your questions. Use the “Ask a Master Gardener” option on our website: mgeldorado.ucanr.edu or leave a message on our office telephone: 530-621-5512. We’ll get back to you! Master Gardeners are also on Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest.

For more information on the UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County, see our website at <http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu>.