

SIMPLE SOLUTIONS FOR FOLIAGE PLANTS

SYMPTOM	CAUSE	SOLUTION
Stems grow abnormally long, leaves become long and pale, and the new leaves are undersized.	Not enough light. Too much nitrogen.	Give plants more sunlight, or move closer to plant-growing lights. Reduce use of fertilizer or frequency of use.
Leaves curl under. New leaves are undersized; leaves grow vertically when normally flat.	Too much light.	Give plants more shade or move it farther away from plant-lights.
Stems become mushy, dark in color and rotten; Lower leaves curl and wilt; Soil at top of pot is constantly wet; Roots are black without white tips and hairs.	Too much water.	Do not water so much. Water plants only when top soil is dry to touch and always reduce watering when plant is dormant. Make sure pot has proper drainage holes. Do not let plants sit in their saucers for more than 1/2 hour.
Leaf edges are crispy and brown.	Lack of humidity.	Increase humidity. Place pots in a bed of moist pebbles or place moist peat moss around the tops. Mist the leaves. Move away from appliances, doors and air ducts.
Tips of leaves become brown and wilt. Lower leaves turn yellow and fall off.	Not enough water.	Water until the water runs out of the bottom of the pot. Do not water again until the soil is dry to the touch.
Plants bear few or no flowers and an excessive amount of foliage. Green scum may be present on the sides of clay pots.	Too much fertilizer, especially nitrogen.	Do not use high-nitrogen fertilizers during the blooming season. Do not fertilize dormant plants. During winter, fertilize less often or at half rate.
Lower leaves turn pale green and drop off; new leaves are undersized; stems are stunted.	Lack of fertilizer.	Fertilize more often during plants growing season.
Leaves turn yellow, curl or wilt.	Too much heat.	Move the plant to a cooler spot. Be sure they are not close to a radiator or hot air outlet.
Yellow or brown spots on leaves.	Sun scorch.	Give plants more shade, filter sun through blinds or shades. Move plants to a window that does not receive full midday or afternoon sun.
White or yellow spots on leaves (African violets or other plants with hairy foliage).	Cold water on leaves.	When watering plants, use room temperature water. Do not get leaves wet.
White crust appears on soil surface or on the side of clay pots. Leaves touching the rim wilt, rot and fall off.	Build up of salts from fertilizer.	Water the plant thoroughly to dissolve the salts; after 1/2 hour water again to carry the dissolved salts off through the drainage hole. You can coat the rim with melted wax to prevent future salt build up.
Roots fill the pot completely and may reach down through the bottom hole. Plants may wilt in between watering and bear only a few small new leaves.	Plant is too big for its pot.	Repot plant in no more than a pot 2 sizes larger. (Example, if you have an 8" pot now, no more than a 10" pot is needed to repot the plant.)