

White Flower Farm

PLANTSMEN SINCE 1950



HOW TO CARE FOR HOUSEPLANTS

Our houseplants and indoor bulb gardens have been carefully prepared and require little more than light and water to flourish. This booklet offers general instructions for growing plants indoors, along with specific instructions for many of the plants we offer.

OUR GUARANTEE

Behind the pages of our catalogs stand several dozen careful and competent professionals who are determined to make your gifts successful in every respect. We guarantee complete satisfaction, or your money back.

1-800-411-6159

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GENERAL CARE

The following instructions are intended as a basic introduction to indoor plant care. Even if you are an experienced houseplant grower, please read these general instructions before proceeding to the plant-specific instructions that begin on page 4.

When your order arrives: Open the box right away and examine the contents. Unpack your plants from the box and remove any packing or wrapping materials around the pots. Please notify our Customer Service Department at 1-800-411-6159 immediately if you find a problem upon receipt of your shipment.

A special note to gardeners in mild-winter climates: This booklet is aimed primarily at gardeners who live in climates where frosts are a regular part of winter. If you live in a climate where frost is rare, you may be able to grow many of our houseplants outdoors year-round—either in pots or in the ground. Our knowledge of gardening in such climates is limited, but these instructions will provide you with information on the basic growing requirements—sunlight, water, and temperature—as well as tips on pruning, pest control, and repotting.

Protecting your furniture: Please note that all houseplant containers have the potential to either scratch or cause water damage to tabletops, fine furniture, and windowsills. A cork coaster or plastic saucer placed underneath a pot will protect surfaces. Visit our website for other options.

LIGHT

Our houseplants differ widely in their light requirements, and we urge you to consult the instructions for specific plants, which begin on page 4, before deciding where to put your plant. There are, however, 3 general points we want to stress at the outset. First, many of the flowering plants we offer need full sun (6–8 hours of direct sun) to bloom. In northern areas, where the days in December, January, and February are very short, these sun-loving plants may wait until late winter or early spring to bloom.

Second, in order for a plant to get the light it needs—whether in a south-, west-, or east-facing window—it should be placed as close to the glass as possible. The intensity of light drops rapidly as distance from the window increases. You can move a plant to the center of a room for a special occasion, but return it to the window soon afterward.

Third, anytime you move a plant outdoors to a sunny spot, you must acclimate it to the relatively bright light gradually. If a plant is moved directly from windowsill to full sun, the leaves will scorch, and the plant will look forlorn until it can produce a new set. Put the plant instead in a sheltered, lightly shaded spot, and increase its exposure to sun and wind every few days. At the end of 2 weeks, it will be ready for its final outdoor home.

WATERING

The key to watering most houseplants is to water only when the top ½" of potting mix is dry to the touch and then to water thoroughly, until water drains from the bottom of the pot. We strongly recommend that you avoid watering on a schedule. Instead, water each plant according to its needs. To determine whether a plant requires water, scratch the potting mix with your finger. If the mix is dry ½" below the surface, water. If it's moist, wait. By following this method, you'll discover that the need for water varies greatly with the season. Most plants need more water in spring and summer (when they are in active growth) and less in fall and winter (when most plants rest).

The most common cause of failure with houseplants is overwatering. Many people water heavily assuming that if water is good for plants, more water must be better. It is not. If the potting mix stays wet for a prolonged period, the roots of most plants will suffocate and rot. Initially, the symptom of overwatering resembles that of underwatering: the leaves wilt. If more water does not perk up a wilted plant, the plant is probably suffering from overwatering.

Allow the potting mix to dry out, then resume the watering regimen described above. If the plant is not already past the point of no return, it should soon show signs of recovery.

Please note that most plants should not be allowed to sit in a saucer of water. Potting mix absorbs water like a sponge and will remain saturated until the water in the saucer evaporates. In the meantime, roots may die for lack of oxygen and begin to rot. If water remains in the saucer more than ½ a day after watering, pour it out.

FERTILIZING

For most houseplants, we recommend that you fertilize every 2–4 weeks during the growing season—generally from early spring to early fall—and that you withhold fertilizer entirely during fall and winter, when most plants rest. Use a water-soluble fertilizer designed for houseplants (available on our website or at garden centers) mixed at just ½ the rate suggested by the manufacturer. As with watering, plants suffer if overfertilized. Please note that increasing the amount of fertilizer you use or the frequency with which you apply it is rarely the remedy for an ailing plant. In fact, giving a sick plant more fertilizer may seal its fate. Try to determine the exact cause of the problem (insufficient light? overwatering? air temperature too high? too low?) before you attempt to remedy it.

HUMIDITY

Most houseplants are native to tropical or subtropical regions of the world, where relative humidity is typically very high. They suffer in the dry air produced by furnaces and woodstoves. The best way to increase the humidity around your plants is to run a humidifier nearby. You can also set plants in trays filled with pebbles or gravel. Add water to a level just below the tops of the pebbles (if the potting mix in the pots comes in contact with the water, the mix will draw water into the pot, which will cause the mix to become saturated, eventually leading to rot). Refill trays frequently to replace water lost through evaporation. (Our Humiditrays perform the same function—call us or visit whiteflowerfarm.com for details.)

PESTS

Houseplants, like plants grown outdoors, occasionally suffer from pests. If you see signs of infestation, the first step is to isolate the plant immediately; pests can spread from one plant to another very quickly indoors. Next, dunk all but the pot into warm soapy water (a bar soap such as Ivory seems to work best). Hold your hand over the potting mix to prevent the mix—and the plant—from tumbling into the bath. If the pests persist, spray the upper and lower surfaces of the leaves with insecticidal soap (available at garden centers). If the pests still refuse to give up, we recommend disposing of the plant to prevent spread to healthy plants.

REPOTTING

If you find that a plant is drying out more and more quickly, it probably needs a larger pot. Choose a container that is about 2" larger in diameter than the old pot and purchase a potting mix blended for houseplants. Place the mix in a plastic tub and slowly add warm water, stirring with your hand until the mix is moist but not soggy.

Next, remove the plant from its old pot by turning it upside down. If the plant won't come out, tap the pot against the heel of your hand and tug very gently on the stem. If you see that the plant is badly pot-bound, with roots matted at the bottom and circling the sides, cut ½" of roots and potting mix off the bottom with a sharp knife and make four deep vertical cuts in the root ball—the block of potting mix held together by the roots. Add a layer of moistened mix to the new pot and set the plant inside to check the level of the root ball. Add or remove potting mix from the bottom of the pot until the top of the root ball is ½" below the rim of pot. Then hold the plant by the stem with one hand and fill in around the root ball with mix, firming the mix as you go, without packing it down. Cover the top of the root ball with no more than a thin layer of mix. Firm gently one last time. Then water thoroughly.



JASMINE

The cultural requirements of *Jasminum polyanthum* are simple but exacting. When your plant arrives, put it in a cool room—one where the temperature doesn't climb above 65°F—and set it in a window that receives bright light but little or no direct sun. If exposed to temperatures warmer than 65°F, your plant will grow but not flower. Jasmines are also sensitive to the dryness created by radiators, hot-air vents, and wood-burning stoves. To increase humidity, try one of the techniques described on page 3. Water only when the top ½" of the potting mix is dry to the touch; Jasmine won't tolerate soggy potting mix. Flowering generally begins in late January or early February.

After bloom, give your plant at least 6 hours of direct sun and normal room temperatures. When the danger of frost has passed, set the plant outdoors for the summer, shifting it gradually from a shady spot to full sun. Fertilize according to our recommendations on page 3. Prune as necessary to control size or to maintain shape, but stop pruning by August 1, because the plant sets flower buds in late summer.

To encourage the formation of flower buds for next winter, be sure your plant experiences the cooler temperatures and shorter days of early autumn. The plant needs 4–5 weeks of nighttime temperatures between 40° and 50°F, plenty of sunlight, and the complete absence of artificial light after sundown. Bring the plant indoors before frost. Then give it cool temperatures and indirect light until it blooms again in late winter.



LAVENDER 'GOODWIN CREEK GREY'

To keep its lovely silver coloring and to produce spikes of dark blue flowers from spring to fall, this Lavender demands a sunny south window indoors where it will receive 6–8 hours of direct sun. It will also grow well given 14–16 hours of light under a fluorescent light stand. Daytime temperatures of 60–75°F are fine indoors. In fall and winter, place your Lavender where nighttime temperature falls to 60°F or cooler.

Like most silver-leaved plants, Lavender is adapted to growing in very dry, lean soil. Water only when the top 1" of the potting mix is dry to the touch.

Fertilize no more frequently than once every 6 weeks during the growing season (April through September).

Lavender 'Goodwin Creek Grey' can spend the summer outdoors in a sunny location—either in a pot or in the ground. If you live in Zone 7 (0°F) or warmer in the West, you can grow it outdoors year-round. In colder climates, bring the plant back indoors before frost. (Lavenders falter in the torrid summers and mild wet winters that are common in the South. If you summer your plant outdoors, keep it in a pot and bring it back indoors for the winter.)

Once the flowers have faded on a flower spike, use scissors to cut off the spike close to where it attaches to the stem. Maintain the overall shape of your Lavender by selective pinching of the new shoots. Pinch each shoot between thumb and forefingers; do not shear the plant as though it were a hedge.

AZALEA

Azaleas require full sun in winter and a nighttime temperature of about 60°F. Care should be taken to avoid letting the potting mix dry out completely—the plants may not recover if allowed to wilt. Remove spent blossoms as they fade to keep plants looking tidy, but take care to avoid damaging the green buds at the base of the blossoms. These buds are the source of future growth and flowering.

In spring, repot your Azalea using a peat-moss-based potting mix. Move it outdoors to a spot in partial shade after the danger of frost has passed. To enable it to set flower buds for the following winter, leave the plant outdoors until frost threatens. Then bring it back inside.

As soon as your Azalea Topiary finishes blooming, pinch the new shoots back to 1" —cutting just above a set of leaves—to maintain the ball shape of the head. Also remove any shoots that appear on the main trunk.

CAPE PRIMROSE (STREPTOCARPUS) & STREPTOCARPELLA

These relatives of African Violets prefer the same growing conditions of bright, indirect light. Avoid hot sun, which can burn the leaves and fade the flowers. Day and night temperatures of 60–75°F are fine year round.

Water only when the top 1" of the potting mix is dry to the touch. To avoid causing spots on the leaves, use tepid water, or water from the bottom of the pot. Providing water too frequently will cause the roots, leaves, and base of the plant to rot. If the leaves look wilted even when the soil is moist, you may be overwatering. Let the top 1" of the potting mix dry out before watering again. Plants require less water during the winter months (November through February). To avoid causing spots on the leaves of Streptocarpella, use tepid water, or water from the bottom of the pot.

From spring through fall, apply a water-soluble fertilizer that is high in phosphorus (such as 15-30-15) every 3 weeks. Withhold fertilizer during the winter months, when your plant will stop growing actively and rest. Use scissors to cut off the stalks of faded flowers. The tips of older Cape Primrose leaves become dry as they age, and these too may be trimmed off. Repot your plants into slightly larger pots in spring.

DWARF CHENILLE PLANT (ACALYPHA PENDULA)

Dwarf Chenille Plant thrives in full sun indoors (or partial sun outdoors during the summer). Keep soil evenly moist and apply a balanced liquid fertilizer monthly from May through August. During the winter months, when the plant is not in active growth, water when the top ½" of potting mix is dry to the touch.

CITRUS

(CALAMONDIN ORANGE, KEY LIME, 'MEYER IMPROVED' LEMON)

In most of the United States, these plants must be grown indoors, at least during the winter. Fortunately, their rootstock keeps them a manageable size (to no more than 4–5' in a container), so they can summer on the patio and spend the winter in a greenhouse, an enclosed porch, or near a sunny, south-facing window. Move the plant outdoors in late spring if you'd like, but wait until the weather is warm and settled.

When you receive your plant, do not be alarmed if it begins to drop flowers, fruit, and/or foliage, as this is the plant's reaction to being shipped. Citrus plants need at least 4–6 weeks to acclimate to a new location and this acclimation can take longer if the plant is receiving less than 6 hours of direct sun per day. During this time, DO NOT fertilize the plant, as this will cause further stress. Once the plant is acclimated—which means the plant is able to produce and maintain new growth—you may begin fertilizing according to our recommendations below.

Gardeners in Zone 10 and warmer can grow Calamondin Orange, Key Lime and ‘Meyer Improved’ Lemon outdoors. ‘Meyer Improved’ Lemon is hardy in Zone 9 as well. Set the pot outdoors in a sheltered, lightly shaded spot, increasing the exposure to sun and wind each day. Check the moisture of the potting mix, and water thoroughly if it’s dry. At the end of 1 week (give or take a day or two), your plant will be ready to go into the ground. Choose a spot for your plant that receives full sun (at least 6 hours of direct sun each day) and is protected from drying winds. Planted in the ground, our Citrus will grow approximately 10’ tall.

Whether in the ground or in a container, Citrus need steady moisture. Water when the soil is dry to 1” deep. Don’t let the tree dry out. If it does dry out, there’s a good chance it will drop leaves, fruit, or both. If excessive drying is due to wind outside, move the tree to a more sheltered location. Mulch with bark chips or gravel around the base of the tree (keep it back a few inches from the trunk) to conserve moisture.

Citrus are also heavy feeders: Feed lightly all year long, with a fertilizer that has an N-P-K (nitrogen-phosphorus-potassium) ratio of 3-1-1 plus micronutrients including zinc, iron, and manganese. Miracid (30-10-10), which is widely available, works well (refer to the manufacturer’s instructions for concentration). Leaf yellowing generally indicates insufficient fertilizer or poor drainage.

Prune Citrus at any time of the year except winter. Pinch growing tips and cut back leggy branches to help a spindly tree fill out. Suckers (shoots growing from below the graft or emerging from the soil) should be cut back as soon as they’re noticed.

CHRISTMAS ROSE (HELLEBORUS NIGER)

The Christmas Rose is a hardy, deer-resistant garden plant that is willing to bloom indoors. The large, white flowers will generally open within 3–4 weeks of arrival and can last for two weeks or more. Provide partial shade or bright indirect light. An east- or a west-facing window is ideal. Water when the potting mix is dry to the touch 1” below the surface. Avoid overwatering (which will cause the roots to rot and the leaves to yellow) or letting the potting mix dry out completely. Hellebores are adapted to cool temperatures, so place your plant in the coldest room in the house (a temperature of 55–60°F is best). The cooler the room, the longer you’ll have flowers to enjoy.

When plants are in active growth (April to September) apply a balanced (20-20-20) houseplant fertilizer monthly, diluted to ¼-strength. If you transplant your Christmas Rose to the garden, fertilize it once a year in the spring with a balanced (10-10-10) granular fertilizer.

In all but Gulf Coast areas (southeastern USDA Zones 9 and 10), Christmas Roses can be planted outdoors in spring in a shady location with humus-rich, well-drained soil. Continue to care for your potted plant through the winter and transplant it outside after the danger of frost has passed in spring.

CLIVIA

Clivias have a well-earned reputation as rugged houseplants that demand very little attention. Follow these basic instructions for care, and your Clivia should remain healthy, increase in size, and bloom reliably once a year, sometimes more frequently.

Clivias grow best where they receive bright daylight but little or no direct sun—in a north-facing window, for example, or in an east- or west-facing window that is partially shaded by a deciduous tree. You can summer your plant outdoors in a shady location. Just remember to bring it back in before the first frost. Clivias won’t endure temperatures below freezing.

REST PERIOD: Clivias flower more reliably if you give them a period of rest. Begin this rest period once your plant arrives, and repeat it every year thereafter. For 12–14 weeks

(about 3 months), keep the plant in light in a cool room (50–55°F is ideal) and withhold water. Keep a close eye on your plant during this resting period. If you notice that it is beginning to wilt, add a scant 1–2 cups of water, just enough to moisten the soil lightly. Begin normal watering for the growing season (see below) at the end of the rest period. Bloom usually, but not always, follows in 6–12 weeks. You may allow the plant to grow for 3–4 months after bloom, and then repeat this rest period to encourage it to bloom twice a year.

During the growing season, which begins after the rest period (see above), water thoroughly (until water drains freely from the hole in the bottom of the pot) when the top inch of the potting mix becomes dry to the touch. Clivias prefer to be kept on the dry side. Potting mix that remains constantly wet can cause rot, which is first manifested by the appearance of pale green or bright orange cankers on the leaves. We strongly suggest that you avoid a weekly watering regimen and instead water only when the plant requires it. Please note that misting the leaves is neither necessary nor desirable and can encourage disease.

During spring and summer, fertilize your plant monthly with a water-soluble fertilizer (20-20-20) mixed at ½ the recommended strength. Use restraint: More fertilizer is not better. Stop fertilizing by mid-September.

Cut flower stalks off at the base after the blooms have faded to prevent the plant from expending energy on the production of seeds. Also remove leaves that have withered and turned brown.

Clivias tolerate considerable crowding of their roots and bloom best, in fact, when pot-bound. As a plant grows, some of the fleshy roots may push their way up above the potting mix. This is normal. Repotting is necessary only every 3–5 years. After bloom, lift the plant from its pot and place it in a new pot that is no more than 2" in diameter larger than the old one. Use a potting mix that drains well and that is composed of at least 50% organic matter, such as peat moss or fir bark.

CORALBERRY (ARDISIA CRENATA)

Coralberry plants prefer bright light and can tolerate an hour of direct sun early in the day. They like cool to average room temperatures of 60–70°F. Water when the top ½" of soil is dry and keep the soil evenly moist, never allowing it to dry out completely. Feed every 2 weeks from early spring through summer with an all-purpose fertilizer mixed at half strength. In fall and winter, feed once a month.

CYCLAMEN

Place your plants in a cool room (one where the temperature doesn't rise much above 65°F) by an east- or west-facing window. Take care not to overwater; soggy potting mix causes the tubers to rot. From November through April, fertilize your plants monthly with a water-soluble fertilizer (20-20-20) mixed at ½ the recommended strength.

In early summer, growth stops, the leaves yellow, and the plants eventually go completely dormant. We usually discard our plants at this point, but you can keep them for years of bloom if you drastically reduce the frequency with which you water (to no more than once every 2 weeks) and withhold fertilizer. During dormancy, the pot may appear to contain nothing but potting mix, so you might want to tuck it out of sight, but don't forget to water now and then. If you keep the pot outside, lay it on its side to prevent rain or irrigation water from collecting and rotting the tubers. New shoots appear in fall. Repot at this time (if necessary), and resume normal watering and fertilizing.

DISH GARDENS

Begin by adding moist potting mix to the container until it is about $\frac{3}{4}$ full and dig holes in the soil for your plants. Next, gently remove your plants from their pots and set them in the holes so that the tops of the plants are level with the surface of the soil. Then push soil around and just over the tops of the root balls, firm the soil, and water your dish garden.

GERMAN PRIMROSE

The German Primrose (*Primula obconica*) is a reliable bloomer requiring only the most basic care to brighten a winter windowsill. Give your plant a place in bright but indirect light (no direct sunlight). Water thoroughly when the surface of the soil mix is dry to the touch. Plants grow best at a temperature between 55–77°F. The blooms last longer at the cooler end of this range. Do not fertilize, as German Primrose is a seasonal plant best discarded after bloom.

HERBS

Herbs are generally sun-loving plants and need 6–8 hours of direct sun, regardless of season. During the short days of winter, they must be placed in a sunny south window. Herbs prefer cool temperatures, especially at night. They are happiest where the nighttime temperature drops to 60°F, or even colder.

Our herbs also prefer to be kept on the dry side. Water only when the top $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of potting mix is dry to the touch. Note: The plants will dry out at different rates. We strongly urge you to check each plant daily for dryness and to water each individually in a sink. Do not allow excess water to accumulate in the plant's cachepot or saucer. If the bottoms of the pots are in contact with water, the plants will soon rot.

Although they prefer to have their potting mix on the dry side in winter, these herbs appreciate extra humidity in the air. Avoid placing herbs near sources of heat.

Do not fertilize in winter. From early April until mid-September, fertilize every 6 weeks with a balanced, water-soluble fertilizer mixed at $\frac{1}{2}$ strength.

After several months, these herbs may have outgrown their pots. Either repot them into a container that is about 2 inches wider than the current pot, or plant them out in the garden. If you wish to plant them in the garden, see “Growing herbs outdoors” on our Web site.

Summer care: Potted herbs will be healthier if they are moved outdoors for the summer. When temperatures warm in spring, acclimate them slowly to direct sun (start them in the shade and increase their exposure to full sun over the course of about 10 days). During summer, you'll need to water potted plants much more frequently than you do in winter. Fertilize as directed (see above). Before the first fall frost, bring your plants inside.

Growing herbs outdoors: Where they are not hardy (see * below) or where growing conditions do not suit them (such as the summer heat and winter wet of the South), they are best kept in pots and overwintered indoors. In the garden, provide at least 6 hours of direct sun per day and very well-drained soil. Acclimate your plants to full sun as described under “Summer care” on page 7, and wait to plant until all risk of frost has passed.

**Minimum winter temperatures: Lavender 'Goodwin Creek Grey' 0°F; Lemon Balm -30°F; Oregano -30°F; Rosemary 10°F; Golden Sage 0°F; Lemon Thyme -10°F; Thyme -30°F.*

HOLIDAY CACTUS (SCHLUMBERGERA TRUNCATA)

Also known as the Thanksgiving or Crab Cactus, this easy-to-care for houseplant is native to rainforests of Brazil. It can spend the warmer months of the year outside. Provide partial shade or bright indirect light. During the winter months, when the sun is not as strong, more sunlight is acceptable. Too much sun can burn the leaves or turn them yellow. Water when the potting mix is dry 1" below the surface. Avoid overwatering (which will cause the roots to rot) or letting the potting mix dry out completely. Provide less water from fall through spring. When plants are in active growth (April to September), provide temperatures between 60–80°F. Sudden changes in temperature may cause buds and flowers to fall off.

When plants are in active growth (April to September) apply a balanced (20-20-20) houseplant fertilizer monthly, diluted to ¼ strength. During the shorter days (and longer nights) of fall, the Holiday Cactus forms its flower buds. For a period of about 8 weeks, plants should be kept in the dark 13–14 hours a day and given night-time temperatures of 55–65°F and daytime temperatures of 65–70°F.

Plants bloom best when pot-bound. Repot every 3 years or so using a well-drained potting mix designed for houseplants and a container that is about 1" wider than the previous one.

LEMON CYPRESS (CUPRESSUS MACROCARPA 'GOLDCREST WILMA')

The lemony fragrance and golden yellow-to-chartreuse coloring of this Dwarf Evergreen make it an outstanding choice for containers. Lemon Cypress is easy to grow indoors close to a window where it will receive at least 6–8 hours a day of direct sun. Plants prefer cooler temperatures of 55–65°F. Water when the top 1–2" of potting mix is dry to the touch. Be sure not to overwater, which can lead to problems with root rot. Fertilize just once a year, in early spring, using a balanced fertilizer with a 10-10-10 formula.

Lemon Cypress can spend the summer outdoors in a sunny location. If you live in Zone 7 or warmer, you can grow it outdoors year round. Move your plant outdoors after danger of frost is past. If you wish to keep it in a container, repot every 4 years, using a fast-draining soil mixture. To plant in the ground, choose a site that is protected from cold, harsh winds. Although it prefers full sun, it can tolerate some light shade. It is not fussy about soil as long as it is well drained with a pH of 6.6 to 7.5. It will grow to 6–8' in 10 years with a width of just 1–2', having a narrow columnar habit. Pruning is seldom needed, although it can be gently shaped in spring if necessary.

PLECTRANTHUS 'MONA LAVENDER'

This unfussy genus in the Mint family is native from Africa to Asia and the Pacific Islands. Its members grow well as houseplants in bright, indirect light or partial sun. A daylength of 12 hours or less promotes flowering. Day and night temperatures of 50–80°F are fine year round. Water when the top inch of the potting mix is dry to the touch. Withhold fertilizer while your plant is in flower during the short days of the year. After flowering has finished, feed every 2 weeks with a water-soluble fertilizer that is lower in phosphorus (such as 20-10-20) mixed at ½ strength. Keep your plant compact by occasionally pinching off the tips of new shoots. This allows side branches to develop. Cut off flower stalks when their blooms have faded. About once a year, repot into a larger container (one that is 1–2" greater in diameter), using a well-drained potting mix.

PONYTAIL PALM

Ponytail Palm grows well in bright indirect light and is easy to care for in its mossy orb. When the bottom of the orb is dry to the touch, simply pour water into the glass dish and let the orb absorb it. Drain off any excess water. Feed monthly from spring through summer with an all-purpose fertilizer mixed at ½ strength.

ROSEMARY STANDARD (ROSMARINUS OFFICINALIS)

Rosemary loves sunshine, so give your plant at least 6–8 hours of direct sun. Rosemary also prefers cool temperatures; 60°F or even cooler (down to 40°F) is ideal, and care should be taken to keep your plant away from hot-air vents and radiators. In winter, Rosemary wants the air around it to be moist but the potting mix it grows in to be quite dry. If the air in your house becomes arid in winter, see remedies under “Humidity” on page 3. Meanwhile, water your plant only enough to keep the potting mix from drying out completely. If your plant goes too long without water, some leaves may drop, but they will be replaced by new growth in spring if the plant is returned to its lean watering regimen. As the days lengthen and temperatures warm in spring, water more often, but allow the top 1” of the potting mix to become dry between waterings.

Move your plant to a sunny position outdoors for the summer once all danger of frost has passed. Protect it from strong winds to prevent toppling and bring it back in before hard frost in fall. To retain the shape of your plant, allow new growth to reach 2–3”, then pinch it back to just 1”. Tidy its form before it comes indoors in fall by removing uneven growth.

SUCCULENTS

(ALOE VERA, METROPOLIS, MOROCCAN ACCENTS, STAR CATCHERS)

These succulents have easy requirements for care—bright indirect light, and infrequent watering and feeding. Water about every 3 weeks and even more sparingly during the winter. If the potting mix stays wet, the plants’ roots can begin to rot. Fertilize no more than once a month from spring through summer with an all-purpose fertilizer mixed at ½ strength. Room temperatures of 55–80°F are fine year round. Repot when root bound, using a well-drained potting mix designed for cacti and succulents.

WINTERGREEN (GAULTHERIA PROCUMBENS)

This native American evergreen creeper produces bright red berries with a wintergreen flavor that remain on the plant from July to the next April. To keep Wintergreen happy indoors, give it bright light but little direct sun. It can tolerate only 1–2 hours of direct sun early or late in the day. Plants prefer cool temperatures of about 60–70°F. Keep the soil fairly moist, watering when the top ½” of potting mix is dry to the touch. Fertilizing is seldom necessary.

Wintergreen should be planted outdoors in early spring in Zones 3–8. Give it a shady but bright spot with well-drained soil rich in organic matter, with a pH of 5.5 to 6.5. Prune it back to old wood in spring to encourage new green growth. Over time, a single plant can spread to 3–3½’ in width. The dark green leaves turn red or reddish purple in winter.

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