

PLANT CARE GUIDE

What should you do when you receive a new potted plant or buy one in a shop?

1. LET THE PLANT ACCLIMATISE The first thing you should do when you get a new plant, is unpack it gently and allow it some time to acclimatise to your home.

- Place it in a space with some light, but not bright sunlight to begin with. Keep it away from draughts and excessive heat like radiators.
- Make sure that the pot it is in has drainage holes, and give the plant some water but always allow the excess water to drain away.
- Look at it carefully - check for signs of any pests or any parts of the plant which are withering or droopy.
- Assess whether it will need repotting - this is likely if a substantial number of roots are poking out of the bottom of the pot - but even if it does need repotting, wait a couple of weeks or even longer, before doing this.

2. STUDY WHAT YOUR PARTICULAR PLANT NEEDS Some plants need brighter light than others, some like indirect light and others prefer shade. Some plants need humidity around them, and others prefer a dry atmosphere. Some like their soil to remain damp, and others prefer to be watered infrequently and for their roots to dry out between waterings.

While your new plant is acclimatising to your house, you have the chance to do some research into the best way to care for it.

- Find out what light, humidity, watering and feeding protocols suit it best.
 - Do the leaves need to be misted or dusted?
 - Does it have a growing season and a dormant season? Is there a best time for pruning and repotting?
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Consider all of those things and anything else you find when you research your specific plant. Consider also, the time of year when you first get the plant. It may be a good time of year to make changes, or it may not.

3.

PERFORM PLANT CARE AS NECESSARY

You should now be in a position to make a care plan for your plant. Once it has had a couple of weeks to settle and acclimatise in a neutral position, you can try moving it to a position that you feel most suits its needs.

- If you feel the plant needs repotting, do this after a few weeks, or at the beginning of the next growing season. Choose a pot slightly larger than the one the plant came in, that you feel will adequately contain the roots you can see.
You could take this opportunity to choose a compost mix that is most suitable for your plant's needs, and potentially to add some slow-release fertiliser.
- Set up a watering and feeding schedule that suits your specific plant.
- Research common problems with your plant. Some plants are easily killed with overwatering, others fail to thrive when they don't get enough water. Some leaves do best when they are misted daily, others prefer not to come into contact with water at all, and you should water these plants from the bottom up.
- Watch your plant. Once the growing season starts you should start to see whether the plant is responding to your care. If not, then make changes as you see fit.