

HELP YOUR HOUSE PLANTS

Think you've got spring fever? Your house plants are just itchin' for that springtime sun to shine. To keep their spirits up, give 'em a little TLC.

Temperature: House plants like the same temperatures we like—about 65-75°F during the day, and a bit cooler at night. If it's too hot or too cold for your taste, your plants probably aren't too comfy, either. Keep them away from both cold and hot drafts, and if they're perched on a window ledge, make sure the plant isn't touching the cold glass.

Humidity: Odds are, your plants like more humidity than your home can provide right now. To help 'em stay comfy, you've got a few options:



- ✓ Stack 'em. Set your plants on saucers filled with pebbles and a bit of water. (The bottom of the pot should be above the surface of the water.)
- ✓ No pebbles? Then do the next best thing—add a pan of water to the room your plants are in. As the water evaporates, the humidity will increase.

- ✓ Huddle up. Grouping plants together lets them benefit from water that evaporates from each other's soil. Plus, it makes a nice arrangement.
- ✓ Mistify 'em. If all else fails, get a humidifier. Your plants will be much more comfy, and so will you!

Watering: For most house plants, you can let up a little on the watering during the winter months. Once the soil is barely moist or almost dry to the touch, water 'em well to keep them quenched.

Cleaning: Dust can really accumulate on house plants. Cleaning their leaves helps them look and feel better, and helps keep thugs like mites under control. There are a few ways to get 'em clean:

- ✓ Wipe 'em. Wipe the leaves down with a mild solution of dish soap and water. Use a soft cloth or damp sponge to clean large, flat leaves.
- ✓ Rub-a-dub-dub. For plants with too many leaves to wipe, it's bath time. Carefully adjust the water temperature to lukewarm, and place the plants under a gentle spray from the shower-head. Let 'em sit in the tub until they've drained completely, and then set 'em back in their rightful places.

- ✓ Squeaky clean. Keep 'em clean and mean with a spritz of my **Indoor Clean-Up Tonic**.

Indoor Clean-Up Tonic

- 1 tbsp. of liquid dish soap,
- 1 tbsp. of antiseptic mouthwash,
- 1 tsp. of ammonia,
- 1 tsp. of instant tea granules, and
- 1 quart of warm water.

Mix all of the ingredients together, and pour them into a handheld mist sprayer. Liberally spray on your house plants, and wipe off any excess with a clean, dry cloth.

That's all there is to keeping those house plants happy and healthy 'til the sunny days come. Hang in there—spring's just around the corner!