

Tropical Plant Care

3 Steps to Success



Being successful with house plants can be a challenge with all the varied instruction out there. We will make it easy for you with the following information:

Step 1: LIGHT

Placing plants in the proper light condition is your first step to success. We group light conditions into three categories

Low Light - Northern exposure with no direct sun. East or west exposure with curtain filtered sun. Some plant labels or books will use descriptive words like: indirect light, defused light, light or shade. We call it *low light*. This plant group grows easily with a bright window nearby and no more than one or two hours of sunlight. *Low light does not mean no light.*

Medium Light - North, east or west exposures with one to four hours direct sun. Curtain filtered southern exposure with four to six hours filtered sunlight. Some plant labels or books will use descriptive words like: moderate light, moderate defused light, 50% shade or part shade. We call it *medium light*. This plant group grows easily at the exposures listed above, or with equal amounts of sunlight anywhere indoors with larger than average window area.

High Light = East, west or southern exposure with three to six hours (or more) direct sun. Some plant labels or books will use descriptive words like: bright light, full light, 40% shade or full sun. We call it *high light*. This plant group loves full, direct sunlight, but leaves will burn if plants are grown in too much shade and then placed directly into full sun. Move plants slowly to full sun areas, about 30 minutes to 1 hour increase every five to seven days until plants reach the full sun position.

STEP 2: Watering

How to water your house plants properly promotes good growth and long life. To make it easy for you we will group watering requirements into three categories.

Moist - Plants in this group need consistent moisture. Water soil heavily and let excess water in drain saucer for two to three hours, then empty excess. Water again as soil surface begins to dry just a bit. Most house plants don't have this requirement.

Slightly Dry - Plants in this group need to dry slightly between thorough waterings. Water soil thoroughly and let excess water in drain saucer 10 to 15 minutes, then empty excess. Water again when top one inch feels dry to your touch. Over watering can be a real problem for these plants. Check the soil surface every two to five days by pressing your finger into the top one inch of soil, if dry, water if still moist do not water. Most house plants fit into this category. Some plant labels or books will use descriptive words like: moderately moist soil, moderately dry soil or evenly moist. Simply follow the above instruction for these descriptive words, and enjoy great success.

Dry - This plant group must dry out between thorough waterings. Press deeply into soil, making sure soil is dry before watering thoroughly again. Always empty excess water in saucer in 5 to 10 minutes.

STEP 3: FERTILIZING

How to fertilize house plants for strong vigorous growth and lush green leaves or more and bigger flowers. To make it easy for you we will make two plant food categories.

30-10-10 - Use this plant food with all green non-blooming house plants. The “30” in 30-10-10 is nitrogen which promotes leaf growth and deeper green healthy foliage on house plants. Two exceptions to this “non-blooming recommendation” are Flowering Tropical Hibiscus and the Sweet Scented Gardenia, both need 30-10-10. Feed every 4th or 5th watering or every four to six weeks according to package instructions.

15-30-15 - Use this plant food for blooming house plants. The “30” in 15-30-15 is phosphorus which promotes flowering in your blooming house plants. Feed every 4th or 5th watering or every four to six weeks according to package instructions.

Follow this handy guide and enjoy success with all your tropical plants.