

Plants Can Survive Your Vacation

For a short trip, you can help conserve moisture by placing the plants in a location out of the direct sun. This will slow down the growth of the plant and help reduce the amount of water they need.

You can also place the plants in the bathtub. Water the plants well and cover them with a sheet of plastic. If the plants require high moisture, place about 2.5 cm of water in the stopped up bathtub; the plants can sit above the water on boards. Water the plants well and cover them with plastic. If the bathtub does not receive adequate sunlight, set up artificial plant lights with timers.

The wick watering system is just the thing for those planning lengthy vacations. Place a plastic drop cloth on the floor in the center of a bright room. Set a chair in the center of the drop cloth. On the chair, place a large container of water. A five gallon plastic container of water works nicely for this step. Place the house plants around the chair. The tops of the plants should be lower than the top of the water jug. To make the wicks, cut strips of material from an old woven synthetic blanket, or buy wicking from the garden center. Each wick should be several inches longer than the distance from the plant pot to the container of water. Water the plants well and wet the wicks. Bury one end of the wick deep in the soil of the plant, and drop the other end into the container of water. The wick should be long enough to reach the bottom of the water jug. If you have very large plants, you may need to use more than one wick to keep the soil properly moist. To vary the amount of moisture the plant receives, adjust the depth at which you bury the wick. The deeper the wick is buried, the more moisture the soil will receive.

When the plants and watering system are in place, tent the entire set-up with plastic and set up one or more artificial growing lights outside the tenting. Ask a relative or a friend to pop in once a week and check the water level of the container. Leave a funnel and pitcher handy so that they need not disturb the wick set up.

Teach a neighbor about your plants. Ask a friend or neighbor to help out while you are away. Leave detailed instructions on watering and feeding, and introduce your favorite hobby to someone else.