

# Houseplant Success

*“The most common [houseplants] are exotic plants native to warm, frost-free parts of the world. Those that make the best indoor subjects are the species that adjust comfortably to the rather warm, dry conditions that generally prevail in indoor living spaces.”*

## COMMON HOUSEPLANTS FOR BEGINNERS

<b>Sun-Loving</b>	Rosemary	<b>Shade-Tolerant</b>	Philodendron
Common Geranium	Thyme	African Violet	Pothos
Dwarf Citrus	Succulents	Chinese Evergreen	Ponytail Palm
Herbs	Jade Plant	Dracaena	Snake Plant
Sweet Basil	Hens and Chicks	Hoya	Spider Plant
Oregano	Aloe Vera	Peace Lily	

## MEASURING LIGHT INTENSITY INDOORS

*Houseplants need enough light every day to create new leaves, flowers, and healthy roots. Make sure to provide enough light so your houseplant thrives.*

### Direct, High or Bright Light

- Creates a shadow with sharp edges
- Examples: South window (directly in front), OR East/west window (directly in front), OR South window (up to 5 feet away)

### Medium Light

- Creates a shadow with somewhat fuzzy edges
- Examples: North window: (directly in front) OR East/west window (up to 5 feet away) OR South window (5-10 feet away)

### Low Light

- Creates a shadow without clear edges
- Examples: North window (up to 5 feet away) OR East/West window (5-10 feet away) OR South window (15-20 feet away)

## LEARN MORE WITH THESE EXTENSION RESOURCES

- ❖ **University of MN Extension Program** <https://extension.umn.edu/find-plants/houseplants>
- ❖ **University of Georgia Extension** <https://extension.uga.edu/publications.html>
- ❖ **North Dakota State University Extension Services** <https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/publications>
- ❖ **Taylor's Guide to Houseplants** by Gordon DeWolf & Norman Taylor
- ❖ **Ramsey County Master Gardeners** [www.ramseymastergardeners.org](http://www.ramseymastergardeners.org)

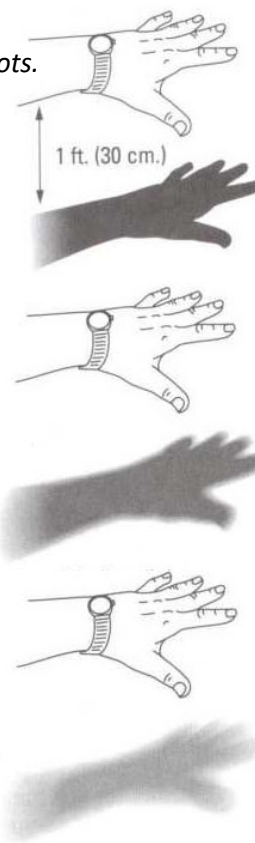


Image 1: From "Houseplants for Dummies" by Larry Hodgson

## **CLASS NOTES**

---

### **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER**

What are the growing conditions like in my house?  
(Light, humidity, temperature)

How will I remember to check the soil so my plants always have enough water?

What problems have I had growing houseplants before?  
Do I have the information to solve them now?



## Houseplant Troubleshooting

<b>Problem</b>	<b>Cause</b>	<b>Suggestion</b>
<b>Plants are wilted</b>	Wrong amount of water: Too much OR Not enough	Check to see if the soil is dry before adding more water. Too little water and the plant can't photosynthesize; too much water and the plant roots start dying. Both cause the plant to wilt.
	Wrong amount of nutrition: Too much	Too much of a good thing or delivered at the wrong time can overwhelm plants. Make sure to follow the instructions on your chosen fertilizer and apply at the right time for your plant
	Pest problems	Inspect tops and undersides of leaves for insects, webbing, holes, honeydew & eggs. Look for patterns about where the problems start and how they progress.
<b>Plants are undersized or stunted</b>	Wrong amount of nutrition: Too much OR Not enough	Make sure to follow the instructions on your chosen fertilizer and apply at the right time for your plant.
<b>Leaves turn yellow &amp; drop off</b>	Wrong amount of light: Not enough	Check to make sure you are providing enough light for your plant.
	Wrong amount of water: Too much	Too much water prevents air from getting to the roots. Let the soil dry out before next watering.
<b>Leaves turn brown &amp; drop off</b>	Wrong amount of light: Too much	Too much light can cause the leaves to burn and feeling like paper. Check to make sure you are providing the right light for your plant.
	Wrong amount of water: Not enough	Without enough water, plants will start to discard leaves, causing them to dry up and fall off.
	Wrong amount of nutrition: Not enough	Without enough nutrition, plants will start to discard leaves, causing them to dry up and fall off,
<b>Leaves tips &amp; edges become dry or brittle</b>	Wrong amount of water: Not enough	Without enough water, plants will start to discard leaves, causing them to dry up and fall off. This often starts at the leaf edges, or margins.
	Wrong amount of nutrition: Too much	Make sure to follow the instructions on your chosen fertilizer and apply at the right time for your plant to prevent leaves from drying up and falling off.
<b>Roots rot</b>	Wrong amount of water: Too much	Too much water prevents air from getting to the roots and causes them to die. Let the soil dry out before next watering.

<b>Problem</b>	<b>Cause</b>	<b>Suggestion</b>
<b>Stems are spindly &amp; grow slowly</b>	Wrong amount of light: Too little	Plants will stretch towards the nearest source if they are not getting enough light.
<b>New leaves are pale, faded, or lack normal variegation</b>	Wrong amount of light: Too much OR Not enough	Check to make sure you are providing the right amount and intensity of light for your plant.
	Wrong amount of nutrition: Not enough	Make sure to follow the instructions on your chosen fertilizer and apply at the right time for your plant.
	Pest problems	Inspect tops and undersides of leaves for insects, webbing, holes, honeydew & eggs. Look for patterns about where the problems start and how they progress.
<b>Bumps or blisters (Oedema) develop on the underside of the leaves</b>	Wrong amount of water: Too much	Check to make sure that the soil is dry before adding more water.
<b>Plant grows adventitious roots above the soil</b>	Wrong amount of water: Too much	Too much water prevents air from getting to the roots. Sometimes the plant grows new roots in the air in order to fix this. Let the soil dry out before next watering.
<b>Plant won't flower or re-bloom</b>	Wrong amount of light: Too little OR too little	Many plants will not flower unless specific light needs are met. Learn what your plant needs to flower or rebloom.
	Wrong amount of nutrition: Not enough	Flowers take a lot of energy for plants to produce. Make sure to follow the instructions on your chosen fertilizer and apply at the right time for your plant.

### **LEARN MORE WITH THESE EXTENSION RESOURCES**

- ❖ **University of MN Extension Program**  
<https://extension.umn.edu/find-plants/houseplants>
- ❖ **Ramsey County Master Gardeners** [www.ramseymastergardeners.org](http://www.ramseymastergardeners.org)
- ❖ **Ask An Expert** <http://www.extension.umn.edu/garden/ask/>