SpotPlanted

Winter plant care checklist

Work through these steps as the days get shorter, and keep the sheet near your plants until spring.

Light

- [ ] Move plants closer to your sunniest windows; days are shorter and the light is weaker.
- [ ] Turn each pot every week or two so all sides of the plant get light.
- [ ] Recheck each window: the low sun and bare trees change how much light it gets.
- [ ] Wash the windows, open the curtains and wipe dust off the leaves to let more light in.
- [ ] If plants stretch toward the window, add a grow light above them.

Water

- [ ] Water less often: check the soil first, and water only when the top inch is dry.
- [ ] Water until it drains, then empty the saucer.
- [ ] Use room temperature water, never cold or hot water.

Humidity

- [ ] Expect dry air: heated homes often fall far below the humidity most houseplants like.
- [ ] Group plants together, set pots on pebble trays above the water line, or run a humidifier.
- [ ] Don't count on misting; it raises humidity for only a few minutes.

Temperature

- [ ] Keep plants away from cold drafts, outside doors, heat vents, radiators and fireplaces.
- [ ] Keep leaves off cold window glass, and don't trap plants between the curtain and the window.

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Temperature

- [ ] Aim for about 65 to 75°F by day, a little cooler at night, and above 55°F.

Feeding, repotting and pests

- [ ] Stop fertilizing in fall and winter, and start again in spring when plants begin to grow.
- [ ] Save repotting for spring unless a plant truly can't wait.
- [ ] Each time you water, check the undersides of a few leaves and the stems for spider mites.

Plants coming in from outdoors

- [ ] Bring plants that summered outdoors inside when nights drop to about 50°F.
- [ ] Check their leaves, stems and soil for pests and rinse the foliage before they come in.
- [ ] Keep them apart from your other plants for a few weeks, and expect some leaf drop.