

# Repotting Houseplants

*Houseplants need to be repotted for one of two reasons: either the root system has become too massive for the existing pot, or the plant has used all of the nutrients in the existing soil.*

It's easy to tell if a plant needs repotting. Remove it from its pot and look at the root system. (If you can't easily remove the plant from the pot, see the suggestions below) If there is a mass of roots and little or no soil showing, it is pot-bound and needs to be repotted. Other signs that a plant may need repotting are roots growing through the pot base and weak, slow plant growth. Newly purchased plants should not need to be repotted.

Follow these easy steps to repot your houseplants:

- ◇ Prepare a sterilized\*, dry pot not more than two sizes larger than the old one. Any terra cotta, decorative, or plastic container with proper drainage holes will work nicely.
- ◇ Water the plant well. Hold the pot and the plant on their side. Gently tap the rim of the pot on the edge of a table and remove the pot with one hand while you support the plant with the other hand. If the pot sticks, tap it in several places. If all else fails or the pot is too large to maneuver easily, run a sharp knife just inside the edge of the pot to sever attached roots.
- ◇ Gently untangle the roots at the bottom of the ball and remove any bits of old clay or stone. Roots that have begun to circle may need to be pruned to fit into the new pot.
- ◇ Remove damaged or dead roots with a sharp knife.
- ◇ Gently break the roots at the bottom of the ball and remove any bits of old clay or stone. Remove all loose, old soil from the top to a depth of about 1/2 inch. Always handle the "naked" plant carefully to avoid damage to the leaves or buds.
- ◇ Place soil in the bottom of the new pot. You'll have to eyeball the soil level so that the final soil level will be 1/2 to 1" below the rim. Lower the plant into the new pot and add more soil around the root ball and replacing the 1/2" you removed from the top, firming it with your fingers or a stick or tool handle. Continue adding soil until the pot is filled to within about 1/2" of the rim. Any of our bagged container potting mixes can be used with excellent results.

\*Sterilize old pots with a 10% bleach solution, or put 1 ½ cups of bleach in a 1 gallon container, then fill to top with water.



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*If you have specialty plants (cacti or succulents, orchids, African violets, etc.) you can find specialty bagged potting mixes formulated for their different needs.*



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