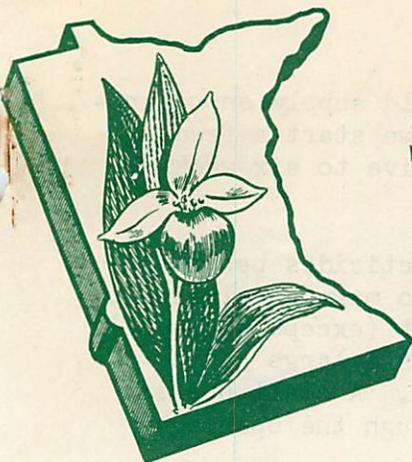


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CARE OF ORNAMENTAL GREEN PLANTS¹ IN THE RETAIL STORE AND HOME

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Two of the most important factors in good plant growth are light and water. Let's take the watering first.

The water should be of room temperature (approximately 65°-70°) and applied when the soil is moderately dry. At times it is difficult to distinguish a moist soil from a moderately dry one. The soil color should be light and not a dark color before watering. If your soil is black in color even when dry or if you are in doubt, feel of the soil. If the soil is dry, hard or crusted on top, it is time to water. Plants that are extremely dry should be watered once followed by a second watering in 15 minutes. We never recommend that you place your plant in a container of water. Root action can very easily be lost by this method. Plants can better be watered in the home if they are taken to the kitchen while being watered. At this time it is advisable to spray the leaves of the plants both top and bottom. Small pots or containers usually take more frequent waterings. It is essential that every container planted for the home have some provision for drainage or have a charcoal base to take care of any possible excess of water.

Most plants require an abundance of light. The ornamentals should be given as much light as possible but still not have the direct rays of the sun. During summer months a South window in a store or home should have venetian blinds or curtains to break the direct sunlight. If the growth of your plants is quite soft, rather succulent and has elongated stems and leaf structure, the plant is not getting sufficient light. Plants that draw toward a lighter area are indicating that more light is needed. During the darker months additional light is advantageous to many plants. Fluorescent light is now being used in many homes and stores to provide better growing conditions. Never place your plants too close to the window during winter months. Plants chill very easily in this manner.

Good air circulation and a temperature around 65° to 70° is the best for home or store.

The soil mixture for most green plants is as follows: 3 parts loam, 1 part well-rotted manure, 1 part horticultural peat moss, 1/2 part coarse sand. This mixture is steamed to 180° and held at that temperature for 1/2 hour. After the soil has cooled we

¹From a talk presented at the Tri-State Meetings on September 13.

add a 3" pot of bone meal to each bushel of soil. This mixture should supply enough nutrients to the plants for at least eight to ten weeks at which time we start a feeding with a liquid fertilizer. A light application of fertilizer every five to six weeks should be sufficient.

It is impossible to spray plants in the home or store with insecticides because of the damage done to the interior. The best method we have found is to make a solution of a good insecticide in a container big enough so that the entire plant (except the soil) can be dipped in the solution. Another method sometimes used employs a large paste-board box. The plants are placed in the box which is closed tightly. A small opening is cut in the side of the box and the nozzle of a duster placed through the opening. Several shots of a good all-purpose dust are sufficient.