

CLEAN UP YOUR FOLIAGE PLANTS

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Foliage plants whose leaves have become coated with dust and dirt represent a problem to the grower as well as the consumer. Not only are these leaves unsightly but dirt can clog the leaf's stomates posing a problem to the plant's physiological functions.

There are several causes of dirty foliage including dust and pesticide residues. Dust in a greenhouse is common, especially where concrete floors are swept or dirt floors are still present. The greatest amount of residue on leaves is attributed to pesticides because of their frequent and widespread use in the greenhouse. Wettable powders leave a greater amount of residue on foliage than do emulsified concentrates but are less likely to be phytotoxic. Still other causes of problems on foliage include deposits of minerals from the watering system such as iron and calcium. Another culprit includes other plants such as algae which also grow on leaves as well as on clay pots due to the humid conditions in the greenhouse.

Knowing what the above problems are, what is the best solution? Periodic washing of foliage may be necessary if plants are going to be held in the greenhouse, shop or home for an extended period of time. Adding a few drops of detergent per gallon of water makes a good cleaning material. Moisten a soft cloth and rub the leaves.

Commercial greenhouses usually do not bother using commercial plant shines to improve the luster of the leaves. This is more common in homes and floral shops. These plant shines leave a filmy deposit on the leaves on which dust collects. This practice may actually cause more harm than good by clogging the stomates of the plant.

In conclusion, clean leaves not only enhance customer acceptance of foliage plants but also promotes better plant growth.