

## House Plant Care Tips

### **Insect / Pest Symptoms Treatment**

Spider mites' webbing may be seen, usually under leaves. To test for mites, tap the leaf while holding a white piece of paper underneath. Check for moving specks on the paper. Use Tenderleaf spray or systemic insecticide.

Mealy bugs appear as cottony-clusters on undersides of leaves or at leaf and stem intersections. Use a systemic insecticide or whitefly and mealy bug spray.

Scale Infested areas will have brown bumps on leaves and sometimes stems. Use a systemic insecticide or whitefly and mealy bug spray.

Springtail little hopping insects can be visible everywhere but no obvious damage will be visible. Use as a soil drench; cover the entire pot with a plastic bag so the fumes penetrate the soil.

Thrips small dark squigglers will fall from cut flowers. Dead, brown streaks will appear on new or opening buds – new buds may open misshapen. Use Tenderleaf spray.

Aphids clear sticky substance found on leaves and stem indicate the presence of aphids, usually found on new growth. It may be green, red, yellow, brown, or black. Use a systemic insecticide.

White fly are white, snow-flake size insects that fly up when the plant is disturbed. Symptoms are pale leaves and wilting of part of or the entire plant. Use White and Mealy bug spray.

Sowbugs usually don't do any damage. Nothing is necessary; they simply feed on organic matter. If it is annoying, use Diazinon or Spectracide.

### **Bringing In Houseplants From Outside**

When bringing your houseplants inside for the winter, you should follow a few simple steps to avoid insect infestation.

While your plant is still outside, spray with diazinon (follow all directions carefully). Make sure to coat both the upper and lower surface of the foliage. Then, in a gallon container, mix the diazinon (again, according to the directions) and pour the solution into the soil.

After being outside for the summer, plants need to get used to the indoors again. This must be done gradually. Put your plants on the porch or at least close to the house for approximately

three (3) days. Be aware of the night temperatures so as to avoid any damage from an untimely frost.

Now you're ready to bring your plant inside. Use systemic granules (an insecticide that's put into the soil and then absorbed into the system of the plant) for added protection against unwanted pests. Be sure to meet the light requirements of your plant as best as you can. Avoid over watering.

### **Caution**

It is recommended that all sprays be used in a well ventilated area and away from food handling areas. Spray concentrates that need mixing should be used in a slightly weak dilution. Applications may have to be repeated every 3 to 5 days because insecticides will not kill insects' eggs.

### **Non-Chemical Controls**

Not always as quick or effective as chemical means, the following treatments are only useful against aphids, mealy bugs, and thrips. Hand remove insects. Swab infested areas with alcohol and rinse with clear water. Use 2 tsp. detergent to 1 gallon of water, spray, and then rinse. Isolate diseased plants to prevent spreading of infestation. Grind up one garlic clove or one large onion with one quart of water – strain solids and mist plant. Allow solution to remain on leaves for about 10 minutes, then rinse thoroughly.

Happy Gardening!