

## **TRANSPLANTING HOUSEPLANTS**

Slow-growing indoor plants rarely need re-potting, while plants that grow at a faster rate may need more frequent reporting. Plants require re-potting when their roots have filled the pot and are growing out the bottom drain holes.

Delaying repotting can severely stress plants and prevent their roots from expanding into the new medium when they're re-potted. The pot selected for re-potting should be no more than 2 inches larger in diameter than the plant's existing pot. It should have at least one drainage hole, must be clean, and may be clay, ceramic or plastic. Wash soluble salts from clay pots with water and a scrub brush and wash all used pots in a solution of 1-part liquid bleach to 9 parts water before reusing them.

To remove most plants from their pots, moisten the plant's soil, hold your hand over the soil with the plant between your index and middle fingers and knock the lip of the container against a solid object. The potting medium should be moistened before repotting begins.

To repot, add some new soil to the bottom of the pot. If the plant has become root bound, it will be necessary to cut and unwind roots that circle the plant to ensure normal root development. If the old soil surface has accumulated salts, the top inch of soil must be removed. Set the root ball in the middle of the new soil. Fill soil around the sides between the root ball and the pot. Don't add soil above the original level on the root ball unless the roots are exposed, or it has been necessary to remove some of the surface soil. Do not pack the soil. To firm or settle it, tap the pot against a tabletop or gently press the soil with your fingers. Watering the plant will also settle the soil.

After watering and settling, the soil level should be sufficiently below the level of the pot to leave room for watering.

Keep the plant out of direct sun for several days after repotting to reduce shock, and then move it back to its usual location.

The **Master Gardener Hotline** is open from April to October, Monday through Friday. Lines are available 9:00 am to noon and 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm at 888-678-3464

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