TROUBLE

IN THE JUNGLE

At Leafy Luv Affair, our purpose is to make you wildly successful plant parents whose urban jungle is the envy of all. Be *aware* that plants-just like humans-get stressed out when their basic needs aren't met. Luckily, if you catch stress signals early and improve your care, plants are *unbe-leaf-ably* resilient. All it takes is patient *tender luvin' care* bolstered by knowledge. Troubleshooting plenty predicaments requires time and keen discernment so we've done all the dirty work for you.

Since plants can be stressed out for multiple reasons, it's important to assess every dirty detail of the specific care you've been giving your plant. Always start your troubleshooting by examining light and watering-the twin causes of most plenty problems. Even the most successful plant parents have times where one or more of their babies are suffering stress. Stay calm and just *grow with the flow*. Our Leafy Luv graphics will give you the knowledge and confidence you need to nurse your baby back to its bodacious self.

TOP CAUSES OF PLANT PASSINGS

1 NOT ENOUGH LIGHT

People tend to think of plants as decorative objects, *styling them in areas where they vibe with their decor*, which tends to be far away from windows, in dark corners of large rooms or hallways. Even if a plant is able to survive in low light, it won't thrive and the risk of root rot is much higher if there's not enough light for the soil to dry out at a fast enough pace. If you want your leafy friends to flourish, give them prime real-estate near your brightest windows and design your decor around them. You'll be surprised at how much more joy you luv your re-imagined digs when your plants are radiating their leafiest vibes. If survival is your goal, you are welcome to take the risk of acclimating your plants to low light settings. Be prepared for stress signals and consider giving 2 week staycations in brighter light or supplementing with artificial lighting to minimize the inevitable 'stress-marks'.

2 OVERWATERING

Most people *over-luv* their plants by watering them too often. Caring for your indoor jungle is quite different from your outdoor garden, as houseplants will dry out much slower with less light and less heat. While you may think plants need water as often as humans, daily waterings will cause your houseplants to rot out faster than you can be-leaf. And as tempting as it is to water all your plants on the same set schedule, different plants want to dry out different amounts between drinks - which is why we've poured our heart and soil into creating a visual guide to wash all your watering worries away.

3 NO DRAINAGE

No one aspires to be responsible for a plant's demise. And since not having drainage is the fastest path to admitting your new plant baby to the ICU, why risk making it that 'it' in the first place? Here's the dirty truth on drainage. If you don't have a hole in the bottom of your container, it's impossible for you to give your babies full drinks when they are thirsty because there's nowhere for that excess water to drain out. Any excess water that hasn't drained out will pool against the roots and cause them to rot - which, unless caught and addressed early - is a likely terminal condition for your green offspring. Let's shout it from the rooftops, friends: Drainage is **ESSENTIAL** to your leafy babies living their longest and most vibrant lives.

So, what are your options if you aren't willing to part with that trendy Anthropology container that wasn't designed with the health of your plant baby in mind? You can either drill a hole in the bottom or you can use it purely for decorative purposes (what OG *Indoor Jungle*-ers refer to as the 'Cache Pot'). The 'Cache Pot' method is a plantastic way to get the best of both worlds: You keep your plant potted in its drainage-filled nursery pot and you take that nursery pot out of the decorative pot when watering. Once the nursery pot is done draining out completely, you can safely tuck it back into its decorative home - without the fear of that home becoming its mortal peril.

While we'd never recommend this to anyone, as a very last resort for the stubborn parents who aren't willing to drill holes or embrace the 'Cache Pot' method: your only other option is to keep your plant chronically thirsty to avoid over-watering. Realize that by taking this approach, you're making a risky trade-off. Under-watering can cause significant *stress to the plant (leaf loss, faded flowers, stagnant growth)* and make it much more susceptible to pests.

4 UP-SIZING TOO BIG TOO FAST

Plants luv to be snug in their homes. Introducing too much soil relative to the size of the root system is a recipe for root rot if there aren't enough roots to drink up all that wet soil fast enough.

5 THIRST

No life can survive without water. Many plants can cope with infrequent waterings in winter months when they are resting, but come spring and summer, if they don't get sufficient water, they'll start to wilt, lose leaves, and stop growing altogether. Eventually, if kept thirsty for too long, they can't be revived.

6 STRONG SUNSHINE

Plants that haven't been exposed to direct sunshine will burn unless they've been slowly and carefully acclimated to handle the heat and intensity. As we've learned the hard way living in Florida, too much direct sunlight can fry the roots and once the roots have been scorched, the plant can't survive.

7 COLD NIGHTS

While this isn't typically a concern in warm, sunny Florida, we do occasionally get some extremely cold weather in winter months. Frost is generally fatal and houseplants sitting on windowsills during cold winter nights are most likely to suffer. Extreme fluctuations in temperatures are also very harmful to plants so avoid styling your green offspring under ACs and heaters or near drafty doors and windows. As a rule of *(green)* thumb, plants appreciate a drop of 5 to 10 degrees at night but a sudden cooling or heating of 20 degrees can be damaging or even incurable.

99 PROBLEMS

BUT A ROOT CAUSE AIN'T ONE

When it comes to plenty predicaments, our visual *'Stress Signals'* diagrams are the best way to kick off your troubleshooting quest - as they dig deep into one root cause at a time, covering all the potential symptoms that your green offspring might be experiencing for that particular problem.

Because plants are often suffering stress from multiple root causes at the same time, solving the plenty puzzle can be quite complex - especially if you're just embarking on your plant parent journey. At Leafy Luv, we don't *be-leaf* in letting any plenty mysteries go unsolved, which is why we've created an exhaustive list of potential symptoms paired with their likely root causes. It's a summary of the same dirty deets we've already shared with you in our numerous advice guides, just showcased from a different perspective.

Keep this guide along with our *'Stress Signals'* diagrams in your plantending tool-kit, and revel in the peace of mind that you can solve any plenty predicament that comes your way.

Leaves

When plants are stressed out, they luv to use their leaves to communicate their need for help. Happy leaves are perky, full-sized, vibrant, and free of any *'stress-marks'*. Unhappy leaves will start to sag, shrink, discolor and fall off.

It's absolutely normal for a newly purchased, potted or moved plant to lose one or two lower leaves from *movement shock*. It's also normal for a mature plant to lose a lower (and older) leaf every now and then. Multiple leaves falling off in succession is your plant's way of crying out for help. The sooner you respond, the higher your chances of nursing your baby back to its happy, bodacious self.

LEAF APPEARANCE

Black sooty substance → disease *(Sooty Mold)*

Brown edges → under-watering, over-fertilizing, too warm

Brown tips → over-watering, dry air, bruising *(from being touched or pressed against something)*

Crinkled, rolled, swollen, puckered *(likely: speckled with yellow or pale green spots / patches)* → virus

Dull and lifeless → too much light, dust/grime, pests

Gray fluffy mold → disease *(Botrytis)*

Holes & tears → damage *(by pets, people or pests)*

Pale and washed out *(likely: yellow spotting)* → under-fertilizing

Pale, small and leggy → too little light

Silver streaking → pest *(Thrips)*

Spots

- **Concentric rust-colored rings of spores or pustules on underside of leaves** → disease *(Rust)*
- **Dry, crisp & brown** → under-watering, over-fertilizing
- **Hard, corky scabs on underside of leaves** → disease *(Oedema)*
- **Pale green or yellow** *(likely: stunted, distorted growth)* → virus
- **Soft & dark brown** *(likely: moist to the touch)* → over-watering, humid air, disease *(Leaf Spot)*
- **Sunken & black** *(likely: dark brown streaks at leaf tips)* → disease *(Anthracnose)*
- **White or straw colored** → pests, disease, watering with cold water, water splashes on leaves, aerosol damage
- **Yellow** *(likely: pale, washed out leaves)* → under-fertilizing

Sticky honeydew deposits → pest *(Aphids, Mealybug, Scale, Whitefly)*

Patches

- **Brown or gray scorch marks** → too much light
- **Gray mold** → humid air
- **Pale green or yellow** *(likely: stunted, distorted growth)* → virus
- **Soft & dark brown** *(likely: moist to the touch)* → over-watering, humid air, disease *(Leaf spot)*

Variegated leaves turn all green → too little light

Webbing → pest *(Web-spinning Mites)*

White powdery substance → disease *(Powdery Mildew)*

Wilting

- *Most likely* → under-watering, over-watering, too much light
- *Other potential root causes* → dry air, too warm, pests, over-fertilizing, root-bound

Yellow edges *(likely: wilting)* → dry air

LEAF LOSS

Curling followed by leaf fall → over-watering, too cold

Drying followed by leaf fall *(lower leaves)* → too little light, under-watering, too warm, under-fertilizing

Yellowing followed by leaf fall → over-watering, too cold, dry air, pests

Sudden leaf fall without any period of wilting or discoloration → extreme dryness at the roots *(under-watering)*, extreme increase in light *(too much light)*, extreme change in temperature *(too cold or too warm)*

Stems

Healthy stems are firm, vibrant and free of any *'stress-marks'*, whereas un-healthy stems are soft, discolored and often sporting one or more *'stress-marks'*.

Soft & dark brown *(and likely moist to the touch)* → over-watering, disease *(Stem or Basal Rot)*

Gray fluffy mold → disease *(Botrytis)*

Base of stem cutting turns black → disease *(Black Leg)*

Webbing → pest *(Web-spinning Mites)*

Flowers

Flowering plants that are mature enough to produce blooms should be actively blossoming during their blooming season - regularly producing healthy, full-sized, vibrant flowers that aren't short-lived. When flowering plants are unhappy, they'll either produce small, poorly colored flowers that fade quickly - or, they may not produce any flowers at all. Some flowering plants need to be very snug *('root-bound')* inside of their homes in order to flower.

Absent → too little light, under-fertilizing, over-fertilizing, dry air, not root-bound, pest *(Thrips)*

Fall → too little light, under-watering, dry air, pests

Moldy → over-watering, humid air

- **Gray fluffy mold** → disease *(Botrytis)*

Quickly fade → too little light, under-watering, dry air, too warm

Small & poorly colored → under-fertilizing

Soil

Healthy soil is free of mold, slime and perky buggers.

Mold → over-watering, humid air, too little light

Slime trails → fungus gnat *(larvae)*

Small, black, winged insects → fungus gnat *(adults)*

Clay Pots

Because clay pots are porous, they will also reveal stress signals resulting from poor care conditions.

Green slime → over-watering, blocked drainage

White crust → over-fertilizing, hard water *(too much salt)*

New Growth

While some plants will naturally grow faster than others, all plants should go through a vigorous growth spurt during spring and summer when the days are long, sunny and warm. Happy plants will regularly push out healthy new growth that is full, vibrant and free of any *'stress-marks'*. Unhappy plants will become sluggish, slowly producing weak new growth that is under-sized, sparse, and distorted.

SLOW OR STATIC

Winter → Normal for all plants expect winter-flowering plants

Growing season *(spring and summer)* → too little light, over-watering, under-watering, under-fertilizing, too warm, root-bound, pests

STUNTED AND SPINDLY

Winter → over-watering, too warm

Growing season *(spring and summer)* → too little light, under-fertilizing, too warm, over-fertilizing

STUNTED AND DISTORTED

Curled leaf edges, twisted stems, withered flower buds, film of dust on underside of leaves → pest *(Cyclamen Mites)*

Curled or dead shoot tips and leaves, silver or dark brown scabby discolorations on leaves, dark specks of excrement → pest *(Thrips)*

Leaves turn yellow or silver before falling prematurely → pest *(Whitefly)*

Pale green or yellow spots or patches → virus

Stippled dots, webbing, leaves turn yellow or red before falling prematurely → pest *(Web-spinning Mites)*

Stunted shoots and yellow leaves → pest *(Aphids)*

Wilting, yellowing and premature falling of leaves → pest *(Scale, Mealybug)*

Leafy Luv Affair provides unlimited troubleshooting for plants purchased at our store.

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