

# IN A PRICKLE?

## NEWBIE PLANT PARENT MISTAKES (AND HOW TO AVOID THEM!)

Leafy Luv Affair *be-leafs* that each of our customers can quickly master plant parenthood – woohoo! We pour our heart and *soil* into sharing all of our care advice and learnings with you to help you avoid beginner mistakes. Bolstered with confidence, you'll be well on your way to growing the urban jungle of your greenest dreams. At Leafy Luv Affair, our mission is to make you wildly successful *jurbunglers*.

Avoid these common *prickles* of newbie plant parents:

### 1 MAKING INFORMED DECISIONS ABOUT PLANT ADOPTIONS

Consider more than shape, appearance and price and you'll avoid adopting a new baby on a whim without understanding the growing conditions that baby needs to thrive. Each plant has unique needs and some are needier than others. Set yourself up for success by understanding in dirty detail what each plant needs to thrive and making an informed choice to adopt plants that vibe with your lighting and your luv language.

### 2 HAVING REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

Indoor plants are living creatives that depend on you for their survival. Just like any hobby, your plant parenthood journey will be filled with learnings. When adopting a frond, keep in mind that a new plant gets homesick even in good conditions. Many will suffer a distinct shock when they are moved from their well-lit and humid greenhouse to your walled-in, dry, and likely darker living room. Don't panic if your plant looks jaded for its first few weeks in your home. It needs some time to adjust to its new (and likely less ideal) environment. More mature (established) plants have an easier time adapting than the young and immature babies.

### 3 GIVING INDOOR PLANTS TOO LITTLE LIGHT

Lighting is the most important detail to get right. If plants aren't getting enough light, they will ultimately decline no matter how much you luv on them. Get in tune with the lighting in your space and use our Leafy Luv graphics to find the ideal spots in your home where your green offspring will live their most bodacious lives.

### 4 TREATING ALL PLANTS THE SAME

Each plant has its own sunshine and water preferences and some can be more finicky than others. While it might seem convenient for you to water all your plants on the same set schedule, treating a drought-tolerant desert dweller the same as a tropical, moisture-loving elephant ear will inevitably cause stress for both babies. Such chronic stress could be irreversible, and sadly result in plant deaths from thirst and rot that could have been prevented with a customized care approach. If you want your indoor jungle to be lush with happy, healthy plants, get in tune with each of your baby's distinct likes and dislikes. Check in with them regularly and frequently so that you can meet their unique needs as they come up and address issues early before it's too late.

### 5 BALANCE AND MODERATION

Eeek! Excesses can be fatal. Too much or too little sun, water, and food are common and disastrous mistakes. Many parents panic when their plant is showing signs of stress, so they place it outside in full sun thinking that direct sunshine will save it. Sadly, even just 1 hour of intense, direct Florida sun can leave permanent scorch marks. If left in full sun unattended, extreme sunburn can tragically even lead to death. Most indoor plants can't handle direct sunlight unless they've been grown in full sun or slowly and carefully acclimated to handle the heat.

### 6 DRAINAGE, DRAINAGE, DRAINAGE

Those decorative pots at West Elm might be cute, but if they don't have a drainage hole, they will be a long-term death sentence for your plant. Drainage is essential to healthy watering practices. We have learned this the hard way in our own plant parent journey, and we cannot stress enough the huge importance of drainage. Because we have your wild success at heart, we only sell pots in our shop that have drainage and we lovingly decline to re-pot any plants in planters that do not have a drainage hole.

### 7 OVER-WATERING FEAR THAT LEADS TO CHRONIC UNDERWATERING

Over-watering is a misguided fear that stems from not understanding healthy watering practices. Most people associate 'over-watering' with the amount of water given to a plant at one time. And most people are so crippled by 'over-watering fear' that they only give their plants a sprinkle, an ice cube or a shot glass of water at a time. This 'sporadic little sips' approach sadly and ironically ends up leading to chronic **under**-watering, as the roots never get sufficiently saturated.

We're here to dispel the myth about over-watering once and for all. Over-watering is the result of saturated soil that stays wet for too long, preventing the roots from getting the vital air they need to breathe. Over-watering happens when plants are watered too often (*frequency, not amount*), kept in too low of light, and/or planted in containers that don't have drainage. Since you're now enlightened enough to appreciate the importance of proper lighting and healthy watering practices, you should feel empowered to give your thirsty plants '*full drinks*'. By fully and evenly saturating the soil until water drips out of the bottom of the drainage holes, you are allowing the roots to get the water they need and you're letting the soil tell you when it's done drinking

### 8 OVER-POTTING SYNDROME

Most plant parents are too eager to re-pot their plants too often and into planters that are way too big. Plants don't want to be disturbed very often and most houseplants thrive when they're nice and snug inside of their containers. The average houseplant parent should only need to re-pot their babies 1x per year, ideally during springtime, to assess root growth and replace nutrient-depleted soil. Plants that have plenty of room left inside of their container for roots to grow in will only need a soil re-fresh. Any plants that have filled up their current containers with roots (called '*root-bound*' or '*pot-bound*') will need a slightly larger pot to continue growing.

At Leafy Luv, we are careful to only up-size 2 inches in diameter at a time – adding enough extra soil so that the roots have more space to grow, without adding too much soil where we risk drowning the roots when we water. The risk of rotting your plants is much higher in bigger pots with lots of extra soil because there aren't enough roots to drink up all that excess wet soil fast enough. We lovingly encourage you to temper your over-potting enthusiasm, being careful to only disturb your babies when they absoleafly need it and to only up-size plants that have maxed out their current homes and are desperate for more room.

### 9 THROWING FERTILIZER AT AN UNHAPPY PLANT, THINKING IT'S JUST "HUNGRY"

Fertilizer will not reverse the stress caused by suboptimal lighting and watering choices. Plants only need food when they are actively growing, and fertilizing a plant that isn't growing due to poor conditions will actually do more harm than good. Use our Leafy Luv graphics to get to the root cause of the stress your baby is experiencing. Once you've successfully nurtured your plant back to health and it's actively growing again, you can start feeding it regularly.

