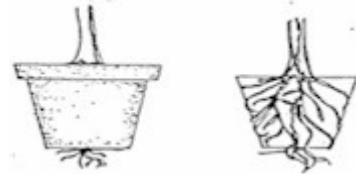


Repotting Houseplants

Actively growing house plants require occasional repotting. This occurs very rarely with some slower growing plants, more frequently with others. Foliage plants require repotting when their roots have filled the pot and are growing out the bottom of the pot.

When repotting becomes necessary due to these indications by the plant, it should be done without delay. The pot selected for repotting should be no more than 2 inches larger in diameter than the pot the plant is currently growing in; should have at least one drainage hole; may be either clay, ceramic or plastic, and must be clean. Wash soluble salts from clay pots with water and a scrub brush and wash all pots in a solution of 1 part liquid bleach to 9 parts water.



Potting media used should be coarse enough to allow good drainage yet have sufficient water retention capabilities. Most plants are removed easily from their pot, if the lip of the container is knocked upside down against any solid object. Hold your hand over the soil, straddling the plant between the fore and middle fingers while knocking it out of its present container.



Potting media should be moistened before repotting begins. To repot, place drainage material in the bottom of the pot, if desired, and some new soil. If the plant has become root bound it will be necessary to cut and unwind any roots that encircle the plant, otherwise the roots will never develop normally. If the old soil surface has accumulated salts, the top inch should be removed.

Set the rootball in the middle of the new soil. Fill soil around the sides between the rootball and pot. Do not add soil above the original level on the rootball, 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 table top or gently press the soil with your fingers.



After watering and settling, the soil level should be sufficiently below the level of the pot to leave headroom. Headroom is the amount of space between the soil level and the top of the pot that allows for watering a plant. A properly potted plant has enough headroom to allow water to wash through the soil to thoroughly moisten it.