

## Transporting House Plants

When transporting plants, remember the two seasons of the year that can cause damage to the plants, the hot summer and the cold winter months. In the summer, avoid placing plants in a car and leaving the car shut up, because temperature will rise and destroy the plant in a short period of time. If you have to travel for any distance at all, the plant can be burned by the sun shining on it even though the air conditioner is on and the temperature is comfortable in the car. Shade the plant from direct sun while it is in the car.

During winter months, wrap plants thoroughly before leaving the store to carry them to your car. A short run from the store to the car in very low temperatures can kill or severely damage plants. Wrap plants thoroughly with newspaper or paper bags, and place in the front of the car and turn on the heater. The trunk of most cars is too cold to carry plants safely during winter months.

On an extended trip make special arrangements so that plants will not be frozen or damaged by cold weather. Many foliage plants will be damaged considerably if the temperature drops much below 50 degrees Fahrenheit, so maintain as warm a temperature as possible around these plants when transporting them from one location to another.

### Acclimatization

Research done in Florida in the late 1970's revealed an interesting phenomenon. Tropical plants grown in full sun have leaves (so called sun leaves) which are structurally different from the leaves of plants grown in shade (shade leaves). Sun leaves have fewer chloroplasts and thus less chlorophyll. Their chloroplasts are located deep inside the leaves and the leaves are thick, small and large in number. Shade leaves have greater numbers of chloroplasts and thus more chlorophyll, are thin, large and few in number. When plants are grown in strong light they develop sun leaves which are photosynthetically very inefficient. If these same plants are placed in low light, they must either remake existing sun leaves or drop their sun leaves and grow a new set of shade leaves which are photosynthetically more efficient. To reduce the shock which occurs when a plant with sun leaves is placed in shade, gradually reduce the light levels it is exposed to. This process is called acclimatization. The homeowner should acclimatize plants when placing them outdoors in summer by gradually increasing light intensities and reversing the process before plants are brought indoors in the fall. For newly purchased plants, acclimatize them by initially locating them in a high light (southern exposure) area of your home and gradually moving them to their permanent darker location over a 4- to 8-week period.