

Column Name - The Heartland Minute

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“Tips for Moving Cold Sensitive Plants Indoors”

We had a nice feel of fall weather starting up, promptly followed by a week of 90 degree highs. Just to keep us on our toes. Sooner than later though, fall weather will turn on and stick. With that in mind, we will need to have a plan in mind for moving houseplants back indoors out of the cool temperatures. Many of you may have moved your plants outside in the summer months to soak up the sun and recover from the stress of an indoor environment.

The first step to beginning the outdoor to indoor transition is to check for insect pests, such as mites and aphids. If any are located, then they can be dislodged from the plant by spraying them with a hose. If they are in the soil, then soak the entire container in lukewarm water for 15 minutes. If the infestation is too great, then you should probably just discard the plant. When you finally get the plants indoors, don't forget to continually monitor for pests to prevent spreading throughout the house.

With your plant indoors, it will require less water and fertilization. You really only need to water the plant when the soil surface is dry, and fertilization will not likely be necessary again until the spring. The next step is to help the plants adjust to lower light conditions found indoors so as to prevent leaf drop.

Start by placing plants close to windows with the brightest light, and over several weeks, move them farther away until they've reached your desired location. While doing this, keep in mind protecting the plants from cold drafts coming from a window or door and excess heat from air vents. Extremes in temperature will stress the plants out more. You can also use supplemental lighting with growth lights.

If your houseplant comes from a tropical region then they will favor humid conditions. Most plants fall in that category. In your house, kitchens and bathrooms will tend to provide this humid environment the plants desire. Grouping the plants together will create a favorable microclimate.

Information comes from K-State University Horticulture Specialist, Cynthia Domenghini.

For more information regarding Agriculture and Natural Resources, 4-H Youth Development, or K-State Research and Extension call the office at 620-583-7455, email me, Ben Sims, at benjam63@ksu.edu, or stop by the office which is located inside the courthouse. Be sure to follow K-State Research and Extension- Greenwood County on Facebook for the most up-to-date information on Extension education programs and the Greenwood County 4-H program.