

INDOOR BLOOMER BASICS

Florist-grown plants are brought to bloom under ideal conditions which you just can't duplicate in the average home. You can, however, follow some general directions for plant care which will help gift plants look their best.

- * First, remember that the air in most wintertime homes is too hot and dry for greenhouse-grown plants to enjoy. To compensate for this lack of moisture, try to keep your plant in a cooler part of the house (away from the heat vents).



- * Increase humidity around the plant by placing it on a tray that is filled with pebbles and water. (Just make sure the plant's pot isn't actually sitting in the water in the tray.) Or, set the plant near a container of water—even a fish bowl will do. The water will evaporate into the air, supplying much-needed moisture.
- * You can also keep your plant from becoming too dry by frequently mist-spraying the leaves with water.
- * If you have a few more plants hanging around the house, group 'em all in one location. Keeping plants together helps to increase humidity around them.
- * Flowering plants need to be watered frequently, but should never be kept soaking wet. Moist soil permits the presence of air around the roots, which is necessary for healthy plant growth. But saturated soil, on the other hand, has no room for air. Remember: Just as many plants die from too much water as too little. To prevent plant loss, let the soil dry out a bit between waterings. And never let the plant stand in water in its pot saucer, or the roots may rot.



- * Flowering plants need light, but the blooms will last longer if the plant is not placed in bright, direct sun. East-facing windows are generally good choices.
- * Do not fertilize a plant which has just come from the florist. It is already potted in soil containing all the nutrients it needs for at least the next two months of growth.