

Home Grounds Fact Sheet

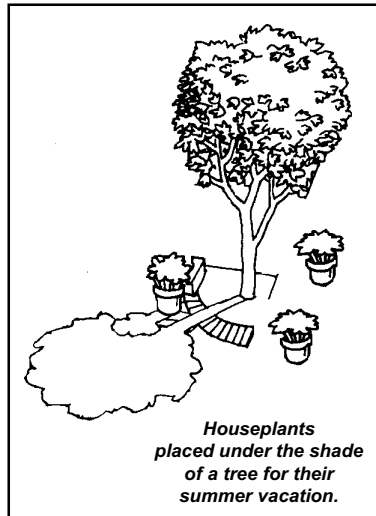
Give Your Houseplants a Summer Vacation

It's a good idea to take your houseplants outside for the summer. With the increased light and humidity, many interior plants put on a flush of new growth, and those that have never flowered probably will in the outdoor environment. Plants that lost their coloration while inside (Coleus, Gynura - Velvet Plant, Wandering Jew) will regain it from the sunlight outside.

If your plants have become long and leggy due to the lack of interior lighting, now is a good time to do some cutting back (if the plants you have will tolerate this - palms, Norfolk Island Pines won't). More compact and healthier growth will result from the pruning due to the increased light.

Houseplants should **not** be placed in direct sun for two reasons. First, they are unaccustomed to that great an intensity of light and many of the older leaves may fall off and/or get sun burn. Secondly, there will be more of a problem when the plants are brought back into the house, which is much darker and leaf drop will again occur. **(Bring your vacationing plants inside the first or second week in September - no later!)**

It is best to place plants outside in areas where they will be getting some shade, such as under a tree. This is great for your hanging baskets. Enough sunlight will get through the



Houseplants placed under the shade of a tree for their summer vacation.

foliar canopy and the tree will give some protection against heavy winds and rain. Potted plants can also be placed under trees for the same reasons. Remember, the light intensity normally found directly inside a window is close to the light intensity found under a high-trimmed tree during the summer.

Simply because your plants are out of the house doesn't mean that Mother Nature is going to do all the work. They still need care, regular watering and fertilization with a wa-

ter-soluble fertilizer or with a slow-release granular fertilizer. For information on how much to use, **follow the directions on the label.**

Insects may be more of a problem outside than inside. Regularly check your plants, especially on the underside of the leaves, to see if there are any insects or mites. Slugs may also be a problem. To lessen possible damage as well as improve air circulation around the plants, get the pots off the ground by placing them on concrete blocks, bricks, inverted pots, etc. **Inspect all plants before bringing them indoors.**

If an insect or disease is suspected, it is best to get an accurate diagnosis of the problem. Only use those materials that are labelled to control the identified problem.