



# WHAT HOUSEPLANTS ARE SAYING WHEN LEAVES CURL

Posted on January 22, 2021 by Ken Lain - Watters Garden Center



Reporters from three different states called last week asking how Watters Garden Center has done so much for the community through COVID? The discussion comes up often at family dinners, and a theme emerges. As a garden retailer, we share much with everyone, even those that may not be aware. A garden center is more than a plant store. We are a Backyard Paradise center, Garden Therapy center, Garden Bliss center, Tension Release center, Joy in the Garden center, Stress Relief center, Backyard Nature center, Escape to the Garden center. What do you think of these ideas generated by local gardeners?

**January** is when you'll find more houseplants at the garden center than any other month. Trucks of plants fill the greenhouses. You buy the perfect specimen, plant in a brand new ceramic pot, and revel in your garden brilliance. What does it mean when your new plant curls and shed leaves?

**Relax** - there are only one of four reasons a plant shows curled leaves.

## **Help, I need water!**

A plant that needs water will tell you when it's thirsty and show faint, curly leaves that often develop brown spots on the ends of the foliage. You need a moisture meter at this point. I've often simply left the meter sticking out of the soil for continual reads. Pre-technology, your grandparents stuck a finger in the plants' soil. When the top 2 inches feels completely dry, soak your plant in the sink for an hour until the soil rehydrates. This is perfect for smaller houseplants. The master bedroom shower works for larger floor plants. Ensure the container has a drainage hole is essential, and don't drench a plant for more than a half-day.

## **Help, I'm being eaten alive!**

[Unwelcome bugs](#) cause a lot of issues, with curling leaves being one of them. Holes in the leaves, speckling, yellowing, or pale leaves are other signs of pest problems. This week gardeners had problems with [fungus gnats](#) here at Watters. Tiny black gnats buzz around the house, but the larvae live in your houseplants' soil and eat the plant from the roots up. Systemic Granules obliterates this pest with one dose. Aphids are next and often seen with the naked eye sucking a plant's lifeforce from the top down. [Triple Action](#) is the safest spray to negate this pest. If in doubt, bring a sample to Watters Garden Center, and we can stick it under the microscope to see what is really going on.

## **Help, I'm burning up!**

Not all plants like direct sunlight; many thrive without any. If your plant is looking scorched, curled, and crispy, and it's in direct sunlight, there's a good chance it wants a darker room in your house.



**Help, I can't . . . Breathe!**

Older plants need more room to breathe after 3-4 years in the same container. Fresh potting soil and more space make houseplants happy. Gently pull the plant out of its pot to see the roots. If they have a dense crust of soil around them, you'll need to give your plant some fresh potting soil.

**Bottom line** - curling leaves are a plants' way of talking, and a gardener understands the language. Plants respond quickly to the gardeners' touch. Check their water level, soil, light, and pest, or simply pluck the curled leaf from the plant, and they look better in no time.

**Best Houseplant Food Ever!** When leaves are on the yellow side of green, and dropping foliage, give them [Root & Grow](#). I developed this composted tea years ago that reduces transplant shock for new seedlings, tomatoes, and shrubs, but houseplants like it even better. Dump the chemical fertilizers and switch your houseplants over to this organic plant food for outstanding results. My cactus, succulents, and African Violets receive the same food for striking blooms indoor and out.

Until next week, I'll be helping local gardens with houseplants here at Watters Garden Center.

*Ken Lain can be found throughout the week at Watters Garden Center, 1815 W. Iron Springs Rd in Prescott, or contacted through his web site at [WattersGardenCenter.com](http://WattersGardenCenter.com) or [FB.com/WattersGardenCenter](https://www.facebook.com/WattersGardenCenter).*