

# HOW TO MOVE YOUR HOUSE PLANTS

## Preparing Your Plants

Like any living thing, plants require special attention. If you're moving long-distance, you'll want to move plants in a temperature-controlled environment such as your car. Extreme temperatures and lack of fresh air in a moving van can be fatal to your plants.

Here are some tips for making sure your plants survive the trip to their new home:

## 3 Weeks Before Moving Day

Repot any plants in clay pots into unbreakable, plastic containers. The new pot should be big enough to hold the plant, without being too big. Jumping pot sizes can cause plants to respond poorly.

## 2 Weeks Before Moving Day

Prune larger plants. Pruning will make packing easier and produce healthy, bushy, compact, attractive houseplants. You can prune by simply pinching back newer growth with your thumb and forefinger.

Succulents (e.g., cacti, jade plants) and ferns do not respond well to pruning.

## 1 Week Before Moving

Eliminate any insects or plant parasites. Pesticides may contain harmful chemicals so use them with care and always follow label directions.

Another way to kill pests is to put the entire plant in a black, plastic utility bag for about six hours with a bug/pest strip or an animal flea collar. Keep the bag in a cool, shady area. This method is environmentally safer for your home and your plant.

## 2 Days Before Moving

Make sure your plants are getting their normal dose of water. Keep in mind that during the winter months, roots saturated with moisture may freeze. In warmer weather, overwatered plants are subject to damaging fungus growth during transit.

## Moving Day

Pack your plants in the morning, or the night before. Conventional packing cartons are good for moving plants. A dishpack, available from the van line, has compartments that easily adapt to holding plants.

Securely anchor each plant to prevent slipping when the box is lifted or jostled during transit. To do this, place the pot in a box, making sure it fits snugly in the bottom. Use paper around the base of the pot to hold it in place. Next, cushion branches and leaves of the plant with soft paper. Moistened paper can be used for short periods; however, plants allowed to remain wet are more susceptible to disease.

Finally, punch air holds in the sides of the box and loosely fasten the lid. Set the boxes upright and clearly mark the lids to avoid putting them into the van with the furniture and your other belongings. If you follow this procedure, your plants will be ready to travel safely for up to four days.

## Rules & Regulations Regarding Plants

Many states regulate the transportation of certain plants. Some states even require a "Gypsy Moth Inspection Certificate." Traditionally, California, Arizona, and Florida have the most rigid restrictions. Check with your State Department of Agriculture or Department of Natural Resources to find out the rules and regs of your destination state.

If you find out that you cannot take your plants along, consider taking cuttings instead. Place them in a sterile mix, or in a plastic bag with damp cotton or paper towel. The cuttings should survive several days' travel and be ready to take root in your new home.

## PLANT CARE GUIDE

We couldn't possibly give green thumb troubleshooting tips on all varieties and species of plants, but here's some proper care information on some of the more popular ones.

Plant	Common Problems	Cause/Solution
Philodendron	Leaves droop Leaves turn yellow	Too hot & dry – soak thoroughly, move to a cooler spot. Too wet – check drainage holes, let dry between waterings.
Ficus	Leaf drop	Too wet – allow soil to dry before watering. Too cold/move to brighter, warmer place.
Dieffenbachia	Brown leaves Lanky leaves	Hot, dry air – use cool mist humidifier. Too dark – move to brighter spot.
Boston fern	Spindly fronds Brown fronds	Pot is too big – let it get rootbound. Dry air – use cool mist humidifier, or place a wet sponge among the fronds.
African Violet	Spots on leaves	Water on leaves – just remove spotted leaves, avoid getting water on leaves.
	No flowers	Too dark, increase light intensity.
Aloe-vera	Leaves topple over Leaves wither	Too rootbound – repot, or divide plant. Too dry – water a little more often.
Dracena	Leaves drop	Direct sun/move to more filtered light.
Parlor Palm	Brown leaf tips	Dry air and soil – mist & increase water.
Schefflera	Blackened leaf tips Leaf drop	Soggy soil – reduce water. Cool air – move away from drafts.
Spider Plant	Brown scorch marks on leaves Rotting in center Brown leaf tips	Leaf shine damage – clean with pure water. Too wet – allow to dry before watering. Too hot & dry – move away from direct sun, water more often.

Courtesy of Ace Relocation Systems & Atlas Van Lines

