

**Root Diseases/Pests****Tip**

Many plant pest larvae love potted plants as they prefer the relatively dry, free draining compost of house plants, which is easy to dig through.

Not all insects are pests (some can be harmless or even help by killing pests). Use *Plantarium* to get a close look and identify what is living with your house plant.

**Symptoms**

Root pests take many forms, e.g. fungus gnats (above left), vine weevils (above right), and root mealy bugs. They hide amongst the root system and may go unnoticed until the plant begins to wilt or is terminally damaged.

**Action**

Regular use of *Plantarium* allows identification of root pests as they appear. Contact us via [www.plantarium.co.uk](http://www.plantarium.co.uk) or visit your local garden centre to diagnose the pest and find a solution.

**What about my house plants?**

Mealy bugs attack a wide range of plants but have an affinity for **cacti, palms and ferns**, leaving milky deposits on the stem and leaves. Root mealy bugs also like to feed on the roots of these plants. They resemble small woodlice and may also appear on **Poinsettia, Fuchsias and Saintpaulia (African violets)**.

Watch for swollen bumps on the roots of your **Begonia** (root knot eelworm), or tunnels in the tubers (vine weevil). Vine weevils, a white legless grub (above right) also favour **Primula (primrose), Cyclamen and Pelargonium (geranium)**, and may be observable near the roots.

Adult fungus gnats may be harmless. However, they lay eggs in the compost of house plants producing maggots (above left), which devour young roots.

If you spot a root disease / pest then chemical solutions are available from garden centres to help treat your house plant.

**Using Plantarium**

**Plantarium®** is the revolutionary new transparent plant pot designed to support itself in your house plant container.

Simply lift *Plantarium* by its tabs to reveal the progress of your plant's root development and condition of its soil. Identify **symptoms** and take **action**. Replace *Plantarium* into a decorative outer pot where it sits unseen, ready for the next inspection.

*Plantarium* is available in a range of sizes to fit snugly into your pot.

Remove the guesswork and get to the root of the problem with **Plantarium**.

**From just 49p,** *Plantarium* is great value.

# House Plant Healthcheck

The simple solution to perennial problems

**Plantarium®**

**Pot-Bound****Tip**

Roots grow to seek the source of water / food. For a bottom-watered plant (via a cache-pot or saucer), the appearance of roots growing through the base of the pot may not mean that the plant is pot-bound.

Place a newly repotted plant in a sheltered area to help it overcome the shock more quickly.

**Symptoms**

Repotting should not simply be an annual routine. The time to repot most house plants is when roots become densely matted on the exterior of the compost. When pot-bound, a thick spiral of roots may form at the base of the pot (above left).

**What about my house plants?**

Different plants respond to root growth in different ways, and at different times in their lifecycle. In general, younger plants require potting on more frequently than older, established plants.

Try not to repot your plant too early. This can lead to poor flowering in some house plants such as *Impatiens* (**busy Lizzies**) or *Saintpaulia* (**African violet**). Allowing **cacti** to become slightly pot-bound actually stimulates the plant into flowering.

**Palms** are very sensitive to root disturbance and should only be repotted when thoroughly rootbound.

Never use garden soil for repotting. House plant compost is ideal for most plants. However **orchids** require special compost and should only be repotted when the pot is completely full of roots. *Aphelandra*, *Gardenia*, *Hydrangea* and *Citrus Mitis* flourish in lime-free compost.

**Action**

Simply lift *Plantarium* by the tabs to look for symptoms. If necessary, repot your house plant into next size of *Plantarium*. This allows room for healthy root development. Continue to monitor by inspecting the roots regularly.

House plants do not appreciate their roots being disturbed. Use *Plantarium* to help judge the right time to repot your house plant or spring bulbs without creating a mess or damaging the plant.

**Watering Problems****Tip**

Most house plants are 'killed by kindness', or unknowingly over-watered. They are literally drowned as waterlogged roots are unable to breathe and become affected by root rot (see next page). Don't be fooled by a dry surface as it can conceal underlying moisture.

**Symptoms**

Wilting leaves can result from over- OR under-watering. Under-watered, or dry compost cracks / shrinks allowing water to escape along gaps between compost and the pot (above left).

Over-watered, or wet areas appear dark and water-logged (above right).

**Action**

Judge the water content throughout the compost (a probing finger or moisture meter may not reveal all). Don't guess your plant's water requirements. See above and monitor overall water distribution with *Plantarium*.

**What about my house plants?**

Whilst every house plant needs water, the amount and frequency depends on the type of plant, its size and the time of year.

Most foliage house plants including *Chlorophytum* (**spider plant**), *ornamental fig*, **rubber plants**, *ivies* and *Dieffenbachia* (**dumb cane**) prefer moist (not wet) compost from spring to autumn. Water more sparingly during the winter allowing the compost to partially dry out between waterings.

Most flowering house plants including *Kalanchoe* (**flaming Katy**), *Spathiphyllum* (**peace lily**), *Hibiscus*, *Anthurium*, and *Impatiens* (**busy Lizzies**) prefer moist compost all year round. Do not allow compost to become wet or saturated (above right). All plants, but particularly **African violets**, *Hydrangeas*, **orchids** and *Aphelandras* prefer tepid, soft water to hard, cold tap water. To avoid stem rot, *Cyclamen*, *Gloxinias* and *Saintpaulia* should be watered from below.

**Succulents** and **cacti** should be watered so that the compost is moist during the growth season from spring to autumn. Allow compost to dry out almost completely during the winter. **Orchids** should only be watered when the compost is just about dry.

**Root Rot****Tip**

Self watering pots can be of help for some house plants while you are on holiday over the summer period. However, they can induce root rot since they continue to water your plant when it may actually require a 'winter rest' or break from watering.

**What about my house plants?**

**Cacti**, **succulents**, *Begonias*, **palms**, *Pilea* (**aluminium plant**) and *Saintpaulia* (**African violets**) are particularly prone to the disease.

Unless the first sign of root / stem rot is addressed on *Cyclamen*, *Monstera* (**Swiss-cheese plant**), *Dracaena*, *Scindapsus* (**devil's ivy**) and *Maranta* (**prayer plant**), the plant is very likely to collapse and die.

House plants that prefer lighter watering in the winter (see 'watering problems') may develop root rot if watering is not reduced over this period.

Heavy compost, and pots that lack adequate drainage increase the likelihood of waterlogging. House plants grown directly into a decorative outer pot offer no outlet for excess water to drain away. These scenarios lead to an increased likelihood of root rot.

The *Plantarium* tabs help support your plant above any accumulated excess water.