

### **Moving Houseplants Outdoors for the summer**

Why move indoor houseplants outside for the summer? The most common reason is that many of us are spending more time outside with the popularity of outdoor living centers such as outdoor kitchens, covered patios, pergolas and decks. Houseplants can be used as part of the decor in these places as long as it is well shaded. They usually can only tolerate early morning or highly filtered sun. Tropical plants that have been overwintered can also be moved to the out-of-doors in the spring by gradually acclimating them to the outdoor elements.

Another reason to move them outside is if they are not looking well. Most plants will grow more vigorously in the bright light and fresh air outside – so, this is their “vacation!” Acclimation to the outside environment is essential for houseplants to survive. Therefore, do not move them out until the nighttime temperature reaches 50 degrees consistently. Never move them into the direct sun or without protection from the wind. Even if they are tropical plants that need sun, they need to be gradually moved into sun over several weeks until these sun-lovers can tolerate it.

Houseplants that are outside will need to be watered more often just like container plants. Inspect your houseplants for whitefly, scale, and mealy bug infestations that are often problems with indoor plants. This is a good time to use a good insecticidal soap for houseplants, but be sure you read and follow the directions. This is also a good time to rinse off the leaves on most plants, flush the pots, and repot or refresh the soil with a good potting mix as well as time to fertilize the plants with a slow-release or water-soluble fertilizer specific for houseplants. With longer daylight, all plants will grow much faster than during the winter months. East or north facing covered patios are the best areas for houseplants or shaded plant beds with some protection from the wind. Most indoor plants enjoy the “vacation” outside, but may need to be moved back into the home if temperatures become extremely hot.

Be aware that there are some plants that should NOT go outside, like African Violets and ones that are part of your indoor décor. It is always a good idea to check on specific requirements for each particular plant. Our Master Gardeners are available to assist you with plant identification as well the plants requirement’s if you need help. If your plants do remain inside, be sure that they receive adequate light as the sun changes positions during the summer. A window may also become too sunny for a plant that did fine near it during the winter. Also, keep the (violets) leaves clean by brushing, rinsing, or wiping them to give your houseplants the best chance to always live indoors.

Additional Resource: