

CHECKLIST

Repotting, Step by Step

Repotting is surgery the plant did not ask for. Do it when the roots need it, gently, and then let it rest.

Repot when

- Roots circle the pot or grow out of the holes
- Water runs straight through or soil pulls from the sides
- The plant is top-heavy or dries out within a day
- Soil smells sour or has collapsed and compacted
- It is spring or early summer and growth is active

Do not repot when

- It just arrived home (wait 3 to 6 weeks)
- It is flowering or setting buds
- It is sick or pest-ridden; treat first, refresh top soil instead
- It is midwinter and dormant
- You only want a prettier pot: use it as a cachepot

Gather

- New pot 1 to 2 in wider, with drainage
- Fresh mix suited to the plant
- Clean, sharp pruners wiped with alcohol
- Chopstick, newspaper, watering can
- Gloves for aroids and euphorbias (sap)

The steps

- ☐ Water lightly the day before so the root ball holds together and roots are pliable
- ☐ Cover the new pot's hole with mesh or a shard set on edge, not a gravel layer
- ☐ Add a base layer of fresh mix so the plant will sit at the same depth as before
- ☐ Tip the plant sideways, support the base, and squeeze or tap the old pot to release it
- ☐ Loosen the outer roots with your fingers; tease circling roots outward
- ☐ Shake off loose old mix; rinse only if the old soil is sour or infested
- ☐ Inspect roots: trim anything brown, mushy or hollow back to firm tissue
- ☐ Set the plant centered at its original depth, crown above the soil line
- ☐ Backfill around the sides, tapping the pot to settle mix; do not press hard
- ☐ Water slowly until it drains; top up where the mix has sunk
- ☐ Place in bright, indirect light out of direct sun for a week
- ☐ Hold fertilizer for 4 to 6 weeks; fresh mix has enough

Aftercare

Expect some drooping or a dropped leaf for a week or two: roots were disturbed and cannot yet supply the whole canopy. Keep the soil lightly moist, not wet, and resist the urge to water again because it looks sad.

Why? Damaged roots take up less water. Extra water on top of that is what turns a normal sulk into rot.

Log it

Write it down while it is fresh so you can read the plant's history later.

Date _____
Plant _____
Old pot / new pot _____ in → _____ in
Material _____
Mix used _____
Root notes _____