

Rules To Plant By - Being Your Own Plant Expert

Most plant problems can quickly get a diagnosis, being an expert is not required. There are a few simple questions you need to ask the plant patient to make the choice of the problem being a plant care issue or bug/disease problem.

Plant problems usually come down to elimination.

Let's get started.

If a plant looks to lack vigor, growth looks stunted, flowering is poor the first question to ask is if the plant is getting all the needed nutritional requirements. This goes beyond food, examine the lighting and watering.

How long have you owned the plant? If you've had the plant for over a year what did the plant look like last year at this time. This is why we keep some type of journal.

Are any pests noticeable? If there are did the plant get them last year at this time.

NEXT

Does the plant have any seasonal needs or issues. Dropping of leaves, blooming, etc.

NEXT Step

What's the age of the plant? This goes beyond how long the owner has had it in their possession. Is the plant a seedling? Seedlings, small cloned plants and cuttings may be much different than a fully grown mature plant.

NEXT

If all signs point to no problems it's time to dig deeper. Here's where I pull the plant out of the pot if it is growing in a pot. Examine the root system? Is it healthy? Are the roots actively growing? Is the soil compacted? Does the plant need repotting?

Without a healthy root system your plants are fighting an uphill battle!

NEXT

If the roots look good it's probably time to pull out the magnifying glass. The magnifying glass is a plant doctor's stethoscope. Getting a close up is like an x-ray. A whole new world can be found living on leaves.

Check the undersides of the leaves for critters, it's their campground. Look for spider mites, scale, mealy bugs, aphids, chewing insects and more. I recommend [using neem for controlling plant pest](#).

Learning how you can diagnose any plant problems you may encounter is not that difficult. Take one step at a time - ask "What's Changed" or "What's Different" then eliminate the possibilities and throw in a dash of common sense. Soon you'll be the one giving out house plant care tips.

About the Author

Now you can remove the confusion in your mind on the topic of [neem oil for pest control](#) Visit us at <http://www.plant-care.com/pest-control-without-pesticides.html>.

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