



The Plant Professionals

Ivy Care Tips

Our Ivy, *Hedera helix* (English Ivy), and a small but growing amount of *H. canariensis* (Algerian Ivy) is grown in greenhouses until the moment it is sent to you. As it arrives to you, it is suitable for placement indoors or outdoors (unless it is winter) in a covered area that only receives direct sunlight in the morning. If the intended use is outdoors in full sun, the plants must be slowly acclimated or they will burn. If placed indoors, they will do best in a high light area out of direct sun. Watering frequently depends on temperature, ratio of plant size to pot, humidity, plant vigor and lighting conditions. A large, active growing plant in a medium size container (such as a 6 ½" pot) in a room with plenty of light that is kept around 75 degrees will probably need water twice a week, but check first! The best way to determine if water is needed is to feel the top of the soil with your finger (digging down a ½" is even better). If it feels wet, do not water; if it feels moist, do not water, but check again the following day; if it is dry, water immediately. Ivy likes to dry out slightly between watering; this doesn't mean that it is ok to forget about it for two weeks! Going from very dry to wet more than a couple of times will cause many of the vines to die of root rot. Fertilization is only needed if the plant turns chlorotic (yellow or light green) over time. In a typical home location that would be once or twice a year.

Ivy is a favored host of spider mites especially in the summer. The problem with spider mites is that they are so small that they are everywhere, even in the air. Plants near an open window or a door that is opened frequently have a high chance of becoming infested. They love warm, dry, dusty spots on the tops of plants. The best way to deal with spider mites is to prevent them from becoming a problem. Mist the plants frequently every day or wash them once a week or so. Chemicals such as Spinosad or insecticidal soap work on spider mites (follow the instructions on the label). Mealy bugs are the main insect found on ivy. They are much slower to develop and so if spotted can usually merely be squished to stop their spread. If found, check the plant closely, squish all the visible bugs and spray with insecticidal soap or pyrethrin once or twice to finish off any that were not visible.

One final but important tip would be to transport each plant into a terra cotta pot that is larger than the plastic pot it comes in. Plastic pots are great for production, a greenhouse, and shipping plants to you, but they are not that good for keeping plants alive in a home or store. Ivy roots need lots of oxygen and the porous nature of terra cotta allows plenty of oxygen in while also preventing over-watering by evaporating excess water through the sides of the pot.

Ivy can be grown outdoors in USDA Zones 6 and above or USDA Zone 9 in pots year round professionals if you have a question.