Before purchasing Houseplants there are a few things you should consider.

Look at the location in which you plan to place the plant and think about the following questions:

- How much light will the plant receive? Will it receive direct or indirect light? Intensity?
- Will the plant be exposed to drafts, heat source (vent, fireplace)?
- Humidity is also a factor to consider if you are choosing a plant to use in a bathroom.

Ready to Purchase - What Should You Look For?

Make sure to examine the overall health of the plant before buying. The last thing you want to do is to start out with a plant that has been poorly cared for which may have insects or a disease.

Look for signs of disease:

- Avoid plants which are wilted; may indicate root damage or lack of care.
- Discoloration (yellowing), brown or black spots on leaves or stems could be signs of disease or improper watering. If foliage doesn’t look healthy don’t purchase.

Look for signs of insects:

- Leaves with small white spots may indicate insect feeding turn leaves over and examine the backside for small insects such as aphids or white flies.
- Brush the foliage to see if there any flying insects including black fungus gnats near soil surface.
- Webbing at the base of leaves where they connect to stem can be an indication of spider mites.
- Small, stunted, curled or misshapen leaves could indicate a pest or nutrient problem.

After purchasing:

The Houseplant will need to adjust to its new environment. Give it time to adjust to light, humidity and temperature conditions that may differ greatly from the greenhouse or outdoor environment where they were grown. Don’t be alarmed if the plant drops a few leaves or tips turn brown, once it adjusts this will stop. There are some plants which are very sensitive to environmental changes such as Benjamin Fig or Hibiscus which may drop almost all its leaves but will bounce back once adjusted.

Environmental Symptoms | Causes
--- | ---
Blackening of Foliage | Cold Damage— too close to a window or door where there is a draft.
Brown or Yellowing Leaf Tips | Soil remained dry for too long a period of time. Chemical burn from too much fertilizer.
Excessive Growth, No Flowers | Too much Nitrogen.
Leaf Scorch | Sunburn, too high exposure to light. Occurs often when plants are brought outside for summer.
Spindly Leggy Plants | Not enough sunlight, plant is stretching to reach light.
Wilting | Overwatering if soil is moist.
## Common Pest Problems:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pest</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Damage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aphids</td>
<td>Tiny sap-sucking insects which vary in color from green, yellow, brown, or black located on backs of leaves and on stems.</td>
<td>Feeding damage causes stunted plant growth and curled or distorted foliage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fungus Gnats</td>
<td>Small black flies that infest the soil of potted plants and can be seen flying out of the pot when watered.</td>
<td>The adults lay their eggs in the soil media. The larvae then feed on the decaying matter and on plant roots. They require a moist environment such as overwatered plants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mealybugs</td>
<td>Small soft, oval, sucking insects covered with a white or grayish waxy coating. The nymphs—crawlers are yellowish and free from wax.</td>
<td>Feeding damage causes stunted plant growth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale</td>
<td>Oval or round brown insects found on stems. They may have a hard shell-like covering or a soft grayish white coating depending on species.</td>
<td>Large populations may result in poor growth, reduced vigor and chlorotic (yellowing) of leaves. If uncontrolled plant will decline and die.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spider Mites</td>
<td>Not an insect but an arachnid. Reddish-brown or pale in color, oval-shaped very small (1/50”). Live in colonies of webs at bases and backs of leaves.</td>
<td>Feeding marks show as light dots on the leaf surface from the piercing of the tissue. Continued feeding causes leaves to turn yellow and drop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thrips</td>
<td>Adults are very small (less than 1/25&quot;) straw-colored or black slender insects with 2 pair of wings.</td>
<td>Plant leaves turn pale, silvery and may appear splotchy then fall off. Plants become scarred and twisted in appearance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitefly</td>
<td>Small white winged, sucking insects found in masses on the underside of leaves. When plant is disturbed you will see them flying.</td>
<td>Causes stunted, yellowing leaves. Whiteflies produce honey-dew from feeding that causes leaves to be sticky which can lead to other issues such as black sooty mold, draws aphids.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Disease Issues: Typically don’t develop in the house environment unless improper watering occurs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disease</th>
<th>Symptoms</th>
<th>Management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anthracnose</td>
<td>Leaf tips turn yellow then brown. Entire leaf may die.</td>
<td>Remove infected leaves and avoid getting foliage wet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaf Spots caused by bacteria or fungus</td>
<td>Bacterial: Leaf spots appear water soaked. Fungal: Leaf spots are brown with yellow halo.</td>
<td>Remove infected foliage, avoid getting foliage wet and increase air circulation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powdery Mildew</td>
<td>Foliage develops a white fuzzy fungal covering and may drop leaves.</td>
<td>Remove badly infected foliage, increase air flow, avoid wetting foliage and overwatering plant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Root &amp; Stem Rots</td>
<td>Roots become black or brown and are soft and mushy. Stems may turn brown or black with a distinct line where it is green below.</td>
<td>Caused by overwatering. If entire plant is affected then throw out if some root are white and viable you may be able to remove rotted roots and repot</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Easy Care Houseplants:

*Aglaonemas*—Silver Queen, Chinese Evergreen  
*Anthurium*  
*Aspidistra elatior*—Cast Iron Plant  
*Begonia*—all varieties  
*Chlorophytum*—Spider Plant  
*Dieffenbachia*—Dumbcane *(poisonous if eaten)*  
*Dracena*—Marginata, Janet Craig  
*Dypsis lutescens*—Areca Palm  
*Euphorbia milii*—Crown of Thorns

*Hedera helix*—Ivy varieties  
*Maranta leuconeura*—Prayer Plant  
*Peperomia*—all varieties  
*Philodendron*—all varieties including Pothos, Split-leaf, Monstera  
*Sanseveria*—Snake Plant, Mother-in-Law Tongue  
*Saintpaulia*—African Violet  
*Sapiphyllum*—Peace Lily  
*Zamioculcas*—ZZ Plant

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