

Your Guide to.....

Moving with House Plants!



Sometimes one of the toughest decisions to make when you are moving is... What to do with your plants?

Among your choices might be giving them to friends as remembrances; donating them to a local hospital, nursing home or library; or offering them at a garage sale.

However, if your plants have become too much a part of your family to leave behind, you'll find this booklet a valuable guide to preparing them for the journey.

Pre-Planning is Key

As with the rest of your household goods, moving houseplants to a new home involves pre-planning. Whether you have only a few houseplants or dozens, there are decisions to make:

- Whether to move them yourself or rely on the moving company.
- Whether to take every plant, only favorites or just cuttings for starting new plants.
- When to arrange for any necessary state inspections.
- When and how to start preparing plants for the move.

Finally, you must realize it's possible that not all houseplants will withstand a move in spite of every precaution. Delicate and water-loving plants such as the coleus and Boston fern might not survive relocation. There's no one to blame – it's simply the nature of the plant.

You should be aware of the following information before you begin.

Modes of Transportation

Automobile

By moving your house plants in the family car, you'll have much more control over environmental conditions than if they are moved by any other method.

House plants moved by you should suffer a minimal amount of damage.

A special note: Avoid carrying plants in the car trunk, which can become very hot in the summer and cold during winter.

Suddath Relocation Systems Service

According to federal regulation that govern moving, we can transport perishable plants on a van or under the following conditions:

- The shipment is transported not more than 150 miles and/or delivery is accomplished within 24 hours from loading time.
- No storage is required.
- No preliminary or en route servicing, watering or other preservative method is required of the carrier.

Be sure to discuss moving house plants with Suddath. He can help you select the best way to transport them to your new home.

Air Freight

Airlines accept house plants as air freight. It's your responsibility to see that the plants are carefully packaged, labeled, accompanied by any necessary inspection (phyto-sanitary) certificates, delivered to the air terminal on time and picked up at destination. Freight charges are payable in advance.

Normally, plants shipped by air receive no special handling and might be subjected to temperature extremes and other uncontrollable conditions. It's advisable to think twice before using this form of transportation. If you decide to ship via air, contact local nurseries for suggestions on packing.

Federal and State Regulations

People planning to move house plants from one state to another should be aware of federal and state regulations. The following information applies only to individuals who are moving decorative house plants as part of their household goods.

Plant Quarantines

Federal and/or state plant quarantines restrict the movement of plants that might harbor destructive pests. Before these plants legally can be moved from a quarantined area, they must be cleared by a federal or state plant protection official.

Destructive pests now under federal or state quarantine include the gypsy moth, imported fire ant, Japanese beetle, golden or burrowing nematode, citrus canker and Caribbean

fruit fly. Among other plant pests are the brown garden snail, European corn borer, grub worm, mealy bug, scale insect, spider mite, sweet potato weevil and whitefly.

State Regulations

Seven states require that all house plants be inspected and certified “pest free” before they are moved to these destinations.

Indoor plants should be in a commercial plant mix – not soil or sand taken from the outdoors. If your house plants are potted in outdoor soil or if they have been placed outside for any length of time, the plants should be repotted with a commercial type of soil. However, all plants entering Hawaii and Arizona must be free of soil, sand and earth – as well as insects and diseases.

Some states, such as California, mandate that any plant material must be declared and inspected at the border. House plants can be declared by writing on the inventory list the number of plants included in your shipment. Boxes containing plants should be marked “LOAD LAST” for easy access at an agricultural inspection station.

When traveling to your destination, most states permit the through transit of uncertified, healthy house plants as long as the plants remain in the vehicle and are not “aired” at any stops.

Whether or not a state requires certification, please remember that much time can be saved if plants are accompanied by a state-of-origin inspection certificate, in the event of any border or random inspection.

Obtaining Certification

If the state to which you are moving requires state-of-origin certification of house plants, state and/or federal pest control officials will provide inspection services, certificates and any necessary treatment.

You must personally arrange for inspection of your house plants by an authorized state Department of Agriculture inspector.

Whether plants are moved in your car, on a moving van or by some other means of transportation, the inspection certificate must accompany the house plants to your destination.

General Tips

- **Shock** – Unfortunately, some house plants are susceptible to shock when moved, sometimes even from one room to another.

- **Temperature** – By far, the most critical factor in transporting house plants is temperature. Prolonged exposure to either excessive heat or cold is detrimental to most, with temperatures below 35 degrees or above 95 to 100 degrees for much 9over an hour, is fatal to many. Properly wrapped, insulated and cushioned plants will be able to withstand quite a variation in temperature with being adversely affected.
- **Water** – Most house plants can withstand up to a week or 10 days without watering and suffer little harm. Over watering is one of the major causes of plant failure, since the roots of many rot if they are too wet. When packing, the plant’s soil should be moist, especially if packing in cartons. Trash bags, of suitable size can be used as carton liners. Remember, if using newsprint as a cushioning material, it absorbs moisture and loses its resiliency when wet or damp, whereas bubble wrap and plastic foam do not.
- **Darkness/Light** – When other conditions are favorable, house plants can withstand darkness for up to a week without adverse effects. But plants left in darkness too long “etiolate” – start to sprout abnormal, weak growth that is more susceptible to disease.

When first exposing plants to light after a lengthy period darkness, avoid possible wilting and sunscald. Keep the plants away from direct exposure to the sun until they can be placed in locations comparable to those in which they previously thrived.

- **Cuttings** – For convenience and to save space, you might prefer to take cuttings of your favorite house plants if they can be propagated in this way. Most cuttings will survive for several days if kept in a plastic bag containing damp vermiculite, peat moss or perlite, or even if wrapped in a wet paper towel.

A Preparation Checklist

Three to Four Weeks Before Moving

- Arrange for official inspection and certification of your house plants if this is a requirement of your destination state.
- If no certification is required, inspect the plants yourself and treat for any plant pests that you might have discovered.
- Decide whether you want to transfer plants from clay to plastic pots. Clay pots are a little more vulnerable to damage than plastic ones, but with careful packing, breakage can be avoided.
- Compact plants are easier to handle than spreading ones; a little pruning might be in order. However, excessive pruning of a plant can be harmful. Don’t sacrifice the plant’s health for better manageability.

Two Weeks Before Moving

- Keep your plants a bit on the dry side until shortly before moving. Remember, plants in plastic pots do not need watering as often as those in clay pots; excess water evaporates through clay pots, but not through plastic ones.
- Start collecting packing materials: wood flats, newspapers, plastic trash bags, lightweight cardboard and strong corrugated cardboard cartons.

The Day Before Moving

- Water plants well and let excess water drain away. Note: this does not apply to cacti and other plants whose natural habitat is dry; these plants should be packed carefully to allow the free passage of air
- Assemble plants and packing materials in a convenient area.
- Wrap each pot in aluminum foil or polyethylene film so moisture will not seep through and weaken cushioning materials or cartons.
- Large or tall plants are more easily handled if the branches are bound loosely against the main stem in the direction of growth with a soft band that will not cause injury to the plant.
- Make funnel-shaped plant “sleeves” from lightweight cardboard or obtain them from a florist. Slip each potted plant into one from the top so foliage will be protected.
- If waxed cartons are not available, line boxes with large-size trash bags. The plastic lining restrains moisture while keeping the cardboard carton dry.
- If at all possible, leave the actual packing until moving day.

The Day Before Moving

- Carefully pack plants into prepared cartons, cushioning them with crushed newspaper or bubble wrap so they won't shift. Try to keep plants of similar size together and use cartons that are an inch or more higher than the tallest plants.
- Hanging planters should be placed at one end or in the center of a long horizontal box or tray filled with suitable cushioning materials.
- Place terrariums in cartons of suitable size and wedge in place with cushioning materials.

- ❑ If you are moving the plants yourself, it's unnecessary to close the cartons unless they will be stacked on top of one another in the car. When traveling, park the car in the shade if the weather is hot and in the sun if it's cold.

At Destination

- ❑ Be sure to unpack carefully and check their condition.
- ❑ Place plants in locations similar to the ones they occupied in your old home. Water as normal and try to leave in one place, moving them from room to room, could put them into a state of shock.

All states do NOT require certification, except the following:

**Certification of All
House Plants Required**

Alabama
Delaware
Florida
Maine
Tennessee
Utah
Washington

**All Plants Subject to
Inspection on Arrival**

Arizona
California
Florida
Hawaii
Iowa
Texas
Virginia