

## Ivy Care Tips

Hedera helix (English Ivy) and H.canariensis (Algerian Ivy) is grown in greenhouses until sent to us. When you take it home 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 frequency depends on temperature, ratio of plant size to pot, humidity, plant vigor and lighting conditions. A large, actively 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 inch 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 it is okay 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. Keeping the plant wet all the time will also make it susceptible to root rot. Fertilization is only needed if the plant turns chlorotic (yellow or light green) over time. In a typical home location this 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 placed near an open window or 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 insecticidal soap or diazinon work on spider mites. Mealy bugs are the other main insects 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 visible bugs and spray with insecticidal soap or diazinon once or twice to finish off any that were not visible.

One final but important tip would be to transplant each plant into a terra cotta pot that is larger than the plastic pot it comes in. Plastic pots are great for production in a greenhouse and for shipping, 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 in the ground or USDA Zone 9 in pots year round.