

# Winter plant tips given by botanist

By Tom Eaton

So you splurged this semester and bought a plant. Maybe it just grabbed you as you walked by a plant store, or maybe it caught your eye, cowering from the recent frost, and you brought it inside.

Here are some tips from Glen Drohman, Botany Dept. greenhouse manager, on keeping your plants healthy.

-Place "high light" plants near a south window, or the brightest window in the room where light is not blocked by a tree or building. High light plants include geraniums and spring rye. The east window is best for other indoor plants, such as African violets and philodendrons. But a south or west window will do if there is no window facing east.

-Don't set plants directly on a window sill where they are likely to be affected by cold drafts. Nor should plants be placed next to a hot register. They should be placed on a table near a window.

-Don't give plants too much water. Most plants should not be kept soppy, but they should be kept moist. However cacti may be kept much drier than most plants without harm.

-Fertilizing plants in the winter should be kept to a minimum—about once every six weeks. Plants don't grow as rapidly in the winter as they do in the summer, and overfertilization can cause root damage.

-If your plant gets bugs, the kitchen sink is the best cure. Room temperature water may be used to wash off the bugs.

-A small camel hair brush dipped in a 60 per cent alcohol solution may be used to treat a plant if bugs get out of hand. Rubbing alcohol, or vodka if you feel indulgent, should do the trick.

-If leaves begin to turn brown, check for insects, watering and light conditions. Remember that too much water is as bad as too little.

-Plants need good drainage. A rock or porcelain chip placed at the bottom of the plant's clay pot when planting will help drainage.



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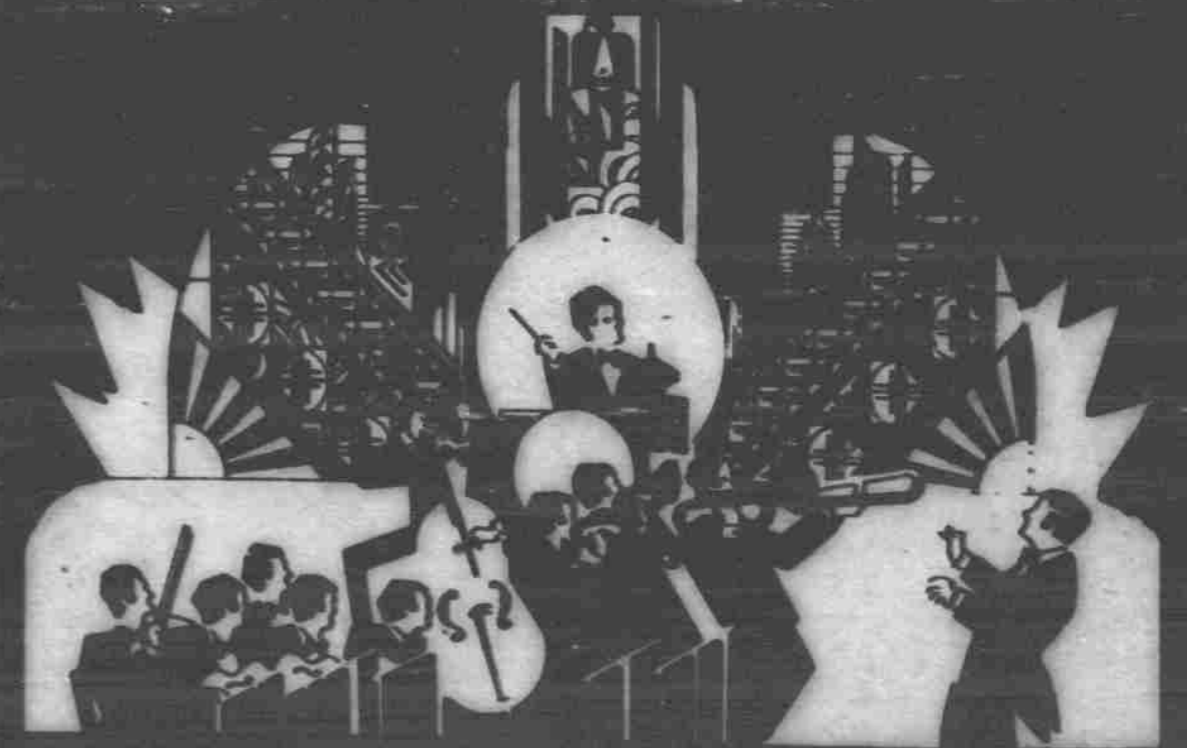
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