

Watering

Practical skills

How to tell when a plant needs water, and when to do it.

Watering on a schedule is what kills most houseplants.

1

Test the soil

Finger 2–3 cm down. Damp means wait.

2

Water thoroughly

Until it runs from the drainage holes. A splash wets only the surface.

3

Let it drain

Never leave a pot standing in water.

4

Wait until it needs it again

Frequency depends on season, light, pot and plant.

5

Outdoors, water at the base

Early morning. Wet leaves in sun encourage disease.

ROUGH GUIDES

Succulents: when bone dry

Most houseplants: top 2 cm dry

Ferns: consistently moist

Winter: much less for nearly everything

Watering less often but more thoroughly grows deeper roots than frequent light watering.