

the housewife will be too generous in this respect. It is difficult to give a definite rule. Generally speaking, the earth in the pot should be kept moist, not wet. If the room is kept at high temperature, the plant will require more water than in a cool place. But winter should be a time of rest for the plant, and therefore nourishment and water should be given sparingly.

Neither a palm, nor any other plant, should ever be put in a glazed pot. If an ornamental pot is desired the earthen pot should be set inside. A porous pot absorbs and evaporates the moisture, while in a glazed pot the earth grows sour and unfit for even very hardy plants. There should be a hole in the bottom of the pot, over which a stone, a bit of broken crockery, or something similar should be laid. A few lumps of common charcoal at the bottom of the pot will prevent the roots from rotting, and powdered charcoal mixed with the earth has the same effect. The chunks localize the effect, keeping the bottom from turning sour.

Having temperature and moisture right, the next enemy of the plant is parasites, such as fungi and insects. Many little insect pests affect the palm. Some of these are destroyed by washing the leaves with a sponge or a soft brush, using clean water only. Those that cannot be destroyed in this way, such as scales, can be quickly despatched by tobacco juice diluted with water. Any tobacco or cigar manufacturer will give you all the ribs of tobacco leaves you want. Put a handful of these in a quart of water and boil. Wash the leaves with this, and if you put in a little whale oil soap it will be all the more effective.

As to fertilizers, none should be used in winter, as it stimulates the plant into an unhealthy activity at a period when it should be resting. If the palm begins to droop and the normal bright green turns into a sickly yellow it is probably because it has been

kept too wet, or if the plant has been in the pot two or three years the soil in which it grew has probably been exhausted. In this case repotting is the only effective remedy. Care should be taken, however, not to transfer to too large a pot. Most people think that the larger the pot the better for the plant. But this is a great mistake. If the pot is too large the plant has more moisture and nourishment than it can absorb, and the roots will rot. A pot an inch and a half larger in diameter than the old one will afford ample room. The second year a portion of the earth in the top of the pot, where it is free from roots, can be removed and fresh put in, but the plant should not go more than two years without repotting.

These rules for palms apply equally to all winter plants. You must adapt your plants to the condition of your rooms. Tell the florist what kind of heat and exposure you have, and he can tell what kind of plants will probably do best in your rooms. Some of the hardiest and most satisfactory varieties of palms are the Kentia, Latania, Areca, Cocus, Corypha, Chamaerops, Dracaena, and Pandanus.

The cactus has been sadly neglected as a house plant. There is no plant that responds more gratefully to a little kindness and intelligent care. Its odd shape will fully compensate for the little trouble the plant causes. Frost and too much moisture are fatal to the cactus family.

The greenhouse favorites, violets, roses and carnations, cannot be grown at home. While the rose will sometimes develop the buds upon it when purchased, it can rarely be induced to blossom again. The azalea, too, which when purchased, is loaded so thickly with blossoms, if kept a year with all care at home, will perhaps put out two or three straggling flowers. But there are plenty of fine house plants that are too little known.—*The Mail and Empire*.