

URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

What went wrong: Wilt

Many novice gardeners may think the only cause of plant wilt is not enough water, but there are actually many different causes of plant wilt for both indoor and outdoor plants. Since it's not always water, be sure to consider every possibility before always chalking wilt up to a thirsty plant.

Moisture levels:

However, sometimes the problem is as simple as the plant's moisture levels. Plants wilt and then die if their soil is too dry because they require water to live and grow. If the soil is dry and your plant is wilting, the likely cause of the wilt is the plant is thirsty and needs water. If you're still experiencing wilt after watering, you may not be watering deeply enough. Be sure to water the soil deeply so the water reaches down to the plant's roots. After water, dig into the soil away from the plant's roots to check the moisture's depth. If the soil isn't wet four inches below the surface, you're not watering deeply enough. On the other side of things, soils that are too wet can also cause wilt. If growing outdoors and overly wet soil is causing the wilt, move your plant to higher ground. Indoors, make sure your plant is in a pot that has drainage holes.

Temperatures:

Plants can wilt because of hot temperatures, as well. Although the sun may not have dried out the soil to cause wilt that way, sometimes heat alone can cause wilt. When this happens, typically the plant recovers later in the day. When a plant is wilting because of high temps, water with an



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overhead system to cool down the leaves. If you live in an extremely hot area where this happens frequently, consider the use of misters or shade covers.

Soil fertility:

Too much fertilizer may have the opposite intended effect and cause the plant to wilt. If you apply fertilizer and as soon as a day later, the plant begins to wilt, it is probably suffering from too much fertilizer. If this happens, use plenty of water to flush the fertilizer out of the soil. If you're growing the plant in a container, consider repotting with fresh, clean soil.

Root-bound plants:

Wilting may be a sign that your plant wants a larger growing environment. If you're growing your plant in a pot, as the plant grows, the roots will require more space. If the roots begin to take up more space than the pot allows, they will require more water



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and nutrients and may wilt due to lack of nutrients. Repot the plant when this occurs. A good rule of thumb is to replot house plans every one to two years to prevent this problem from ever occurring.

Disease:

Of course, a main cause of wilt can be disease as well. The best way to determine if your plant has a disease is to eliminate the other cause of wilt. Once this occurs and you have a good idea of what the disease is, there are fungicides or organic solutions that may restore your plant. However, some plant diseases can't be cured and the plant may die. Be sure to research the disease to learn how to prevent it from affecting your plants again.



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