

Hibiscus

To bring a bit of tropical feel into your home, try a hibiscus plant. They can be a little challenging but nothing Country Fair can't help you with!

Light:

Light and temperature work in opposition for hibiscus plants. With high light, you want reduced temperature; with low light you want increased temperature. In the heat of the summer, a covered patio would be best. Morning sun and afternoon shade would also provide good growing conditions. Hibiscus can tolerate full sun but in the heat of the summer, they might become stressed. In winter, Hibiscus needs the brightest room in the house. With enough light in winter time, they can bloom.

Temperature:

Hibiscuses like temperatures between 60-85°F. If temperatures are below 50°F, most growth and blooming will stop and flower size will be smaller and deformed. A freeze will cause the plant to die so be sure to move your plant indoors before the first fall frost. Hibiscus is also very sensitive to extreme heat. If temperatures are 90°F or higher, their buds will drop and leaves will turn yellow and drop as well.

Water:

Hibiscuses do not like to be left in standing water; however they do like their soil to be kept moist. They will require more water when it is warm and even more when it is hot. During the winter months, they will not require as much. If their soil is kept too dry or moist you will have problems with yellow leaves, insects, and disease issues. If the plant's soil stays wet for too long you run the risk of encouraging diseases like root rot. However, if the soil is too dry for too long, insects may attack the plant. If the soil gets too dry and wilts, water as quickly as possible. Hibiscus can sit in a dish of water for 15-20 minutes, until the soil is thoroughly saturated, then dump out the excess water. The plant should recover but future flowering and growth may be affected. Usually when the soil is dry to the touch, you need to water. Another good rule of thumb is to water once a day when temperatures are 70-80's and twice a day for high 80's and above. Hibiscus also enjoy humidity so misting or hosing down the plant is always a good idea, especially here in Colorado. As for how much water to apply, it will depend on how big your container is, the maturity of the plant, and what the root zone is like. Trial and error can be frustrating but you will have to experiment with watering until you get it right.

Fertilizer:

The best way to fertilize is with a water soluble fertilizer. Use it every time you water or at least once a week. This will help keep the plant healthy and happy which means nice green leaves

and lots of flowers! A plant is more likely to stay healthy with regular feeding as opposed to just a couple times a year. If not fed, a plant will become stressed from lack of nutrients and it can take a long time to recover. A 2-8-4 or 5-10-5 are good examples of blooming fertilizers. Superbloom fertilizers, however, (like a 9-58-8) are to be avoided for hibiscus. Too much phosphorus (the 2nd number in the ratio) can do more harm than good. When trying to decide between two fertilizers, pick the one higher in Potassium (the 3rd number in the ratio). Make sure your fertilizer has micronutrients like copper, magnesium, and iron. If you trim your hibiscus and are looking to re-flush the growth, consider something higher in Nitrogen (the 1st number in the ratio). A 6-4-4 or 12-6-6 would work. Again, look for one with micronutrients.

Pests:

Always identify your pest before treating. Hibiscus is prone to many insects like spider mites and aphids. Most insects can be controlled by using an insecticide like Neem oil. Correct care of your plant will help prevent problems. If it's something you aren't familiar with or you would like confirmation on your diagnosis, put a sample in a sealed container or bag and bring it to us for identification.



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