

CALATHEA CAKE



With their bold stripes, patterns, and colors, calathea have become one of the most popular tropical plants to have in your home. However, they also have a reputation for being difficult plants to care for. Calathea are native to Brazil, making them the ultimate tropical plant, but don't worry, you don't need to move to South America to make your calathea happy!

LIGHT



Calathea prefer bright, indirect light or even dappled sunlight, as they are used to growing along the jungle floor beneath a canopy of trees.

- In general, plants with brighter colored foliage require brighter light than those with deep green leaves.
- However, too much direct sunlight can cause colors and patterns to fade or even burn the leaves.

SOIL



Calathea prefer moist (not soggy) soil; plant in a peaty potting soil that retains water well and allow top 1–2 inches to dry before watering.

Calathea are still susceptible to root rot, so make sure the container has drainage holes, or plant in a plastic nursery pot with holes and place inside a decorative pot.

WATER



It may be best to water calathea more often than other houseplants (prefer to live in moist soil). Let the top 1–2 inches of soil dry out between waterings; do not to let soil dry out completely.

Calathea can be sensitive to minerals in tap water; water with filtered water, rainwater, or just let tap water sit out for 24 hours so chlorine or fluoride can evaporate.

If the leaves begin to wither or brown, this is a sign that your plant is not getting enough water or moisture.

If the lower or inside leaves begin to yellow, this is a sign of overwatering.

FERTILIZER



Fertilize once a month with houseplant food during the active growing season (Mar–Sep).

PROPAGATION



Propagate calathea through root division:

- Untangle roots and gently pull apart the pieces that have naturally separated.
- Propagate during the growing season (Mar–Sep)
- Calathea are fairly slow-growing; divisions may take time to reestablish; provide extra humidity for recovery

TEMPERATURE & HUMIDITY



Calathea prefer warmer, more humid environments with temperatures ranging from 65 to 80°F. Here are 5 ways to boost humidity:

- **Humidifier:** use a large humidifier for an entire room or a smaller tabletop one to target plants directly
- **Misting:** use a fine mister; only mist in the morning so water can evaporate throughout the day
- **Grouping plants together:** plants can help boost one another's humidity
- **Wet pebble tray:** fill a tray with pebbles and water; place plants on top to enhance humidity
- **Domes:** simply place over plant; remove for a bit each day so calathea can "catch its breath"

TROUBLESHOOTING



Leaf yellowing: yellowing leaves that are lower or toward the inside of the plant may be caused by overwatering; yellowing leaves toward the top of the plant may indicate too much direct sunlight

Leaf browning or wilting: usually due to underwatering; increase humidity to help balance moisture

Spider mites: calathea are prone to spider mites; prevent by regularly wiping leaves and spraying with neem oil; if mites are present, fill a spray bottle with water and a little dish soap, spray on leaves and stems to drown mites, wait a few minutes, and gently wipe with a paper towel

Fungus gnats: avoid overwatering to prevent fungus gnats; if gnats are present, top-dress with mosquito bits or dust top of soil with diatomaceous earth until resolved