



5-Minute Plant Diagnostic

Find the cause, get the fix. Research-based, extension-cited.

START · WHAT DOES YOUR PLANT SHOW?

Yellow Leaves

MOST LIKELY

Overwatering. Finger-test soil 2 inches deep. If wet/cool, stop watering.

Alt: Old leaves naturally yellowing — only the bottom leaves — this is normal.

→ Let soil dry. Check drainage hole. Read full guide.

Brown Leaf Tips

MOST LIKELY

Low humidity (for calathea, ferns, prayer plant).

Alt: Tap water fluoride/chlorine. Fertilizer salt buildup.

→ Switch to distilled water. Flush soil with plain water.

Drooping / Wilting

MOST LIKELY

Thirsty. Soil bone-dry? Water thoroughly until drainage runs through.

Alt: If soil is WET and plant droops — root rot. Repot now.

→ Finger-test first. Wet+droopy = root rot emergency.

Curling Leaves

MOST LIKELY

Underwatering OR heat stress from direct sun.

Alt: Pest infestation (look at leaf undersides for webbing or insects).

→ Water + move from window. Inspect for pests.

Black / Mushy Stem at Base

EMERGENCY

Root rot. Plant unpotted, cut off all mushy roots + stem, repot in fresh dry mix.

Salvageable if any white firm roots remain.

→ Act today. Root rot kills fast.

Bugs / White Spots / Webbing

MOST LIKELY

Mealybugs: white cotton spots. **Spider mites:** webbing + stippled leaves. **Fungus gnats:** tiny black flies near soil.

→ Isolate plant. Manual remove first. Then insecticidal soap.

Is It Beyond Saving?

YES if: Roots are 90%+ mushy black, stem snaps when bent, no green tissue anywhere, or it has been sitting in water-rotting for weeks.

NO — rescue possible if: Some firm roots remain (any color but mush-black), any green growth visible, leaves still attached even if drooping.

Rescue Protocol

For most struggling plants:

- Stop watering immediately
- Unpot and inspect roots
- Cut dead/mushy roots with sterilized scissors
- Repot in fresh dry mix, smaller pot
- Bright indirect light, no fertilizer 4-6 weeks