

Moving Your Plants

Rather than moving your houseplants, consider giving them away or selling them. If you move your plants yourself, you'll have more control over environmental conditions than if they are moved by any other method. However, never carry plants in your trunk, which can get too hot in summer and too cold in winter.

Most professional movers will accept plants provided that the plants are transported not more than 150 miles and/or delivery is completed within 24 hours from the time of loading, no storage is required and no enroute servicing is required of the mover.

If you plan to move houseplants interstate, be aware of federal and state plant regulations. Plant quarantines may be in effect in certain areas to restrict the movement of the plants that may harbor destructive pests. Before these plants can be moved, they must be cleared by the appropriate federal or state protection official. Several states require that indoor plants be inspected and certified "pest free" before they can be moved across their borders. Others do not require certification if the houseplants are yours and are not for resale. Still others refuse all entry of specific varieties. Many states permit "thru-transit" of uncertified, healthy houseplants. In some states, vehicles are stopped at random on the highways, and any plants carried are inspected for pests. Others stop vehicles for inspection at their borders. Much time can be saved if the plants are accompanied by state-of-origin certifications.

You must personally arrange for inspection of your houseplants by an authorized State Department of Agriculture inspector. Call the department's county office and schedule an inspection to take place no less than two weeks prior to moving.

Moving Tips

Some houseplants are susceptible to shock when moving. The distance moved or time in transit doesn't make the shock greater - it simply will take the plant longer to recover. Temperatures below 35°F or above 95° - 100°F for much over an hour can be fatal to many plants. Plants in cartons that are properly wrapped will withstand quite a variation in temperature, but don't transport plants in unheated vehicles when the temperature is approaching the freezing point.

Most houseplants can survive up to a week or 10 days without watering. Plants should be moist when placed in cartons. Generally, houseplants can tolerate darkness for up to a week. When first exposing them to light again, avoid possible wilting and sun scald by limiting sun exposure for the first few days.

Another option is to take cuttings of your favorite houseplants, if they can be propagated that way. Most cuttings will survive for several days if kept in a plastic bag containing damp vermiculite, peat moss, or perlite, or even wrapped in a wet paper towel. However, potted plants have a much greater chance of surviving a long trip than do cuttings.

Text courtesy of the American Moving and Storage Association.