

How To Move House Plants

Atlas gives you some tips on how to move your leafy friends.



Regardless of how green your thumb is, Atlas understands that your plants are important. If you want to take plants along when you move, you're probably worried about the best way to move them. Here are some tips to help make their journey a safe one. Ask your Atlas representative if you have other questions about moving plants.

Like any living thing, plants require special attention. Should your move involve a long-distance trip, you'll want to move plants in a temperature-controlled environment such as your car. Extreme temperatures and lack of fresh air in a moving van can be fatal to plants. Moving van temperatures go below freezing in winter months and get very hot (120°F or more) in summer months. Moving plants in your car allows you to give them the special care they need to survive.

According to Item 32 of the Household Goods Carriers' Bureau Tariff, a carrier will not accept shipments containing perishable articles, including plants, except when shipments are moving less than 150 miles and/or delivery will be made within 24 hours from the time of loading. Even when shipments are moving less than 150 miles and delivery is made within 24 hours, you may want to consult with your Atlas representative before deciding on the best and safest means of transportation.

Assistance Available [\(top\)](#)

As your Atlas representative surveys your overall moving requirements, let him or her know that you'll be moving your own plants. Packing materials are available for purchase from your Atlas representative.

If you have questions about the care of specific plants, refer to the chart on this page. It includes 10 plants commonly grown indoors. If you have questions not answered here, consult a reputable plant publication or your local U.S. Department of Agriculture office.

Many states regulate the transportation of certain plants. Some states require a "Gypsy Moth Inspection Certificate." Traditionally, California, Arizona and Florida have the most rigid restrictions on bringing plants into their states. Your State Department of Agriculture or Department of Natural Resources can provide the most current information about your destination state.

As a general rule, most states require transported plants to be grown indoors in sterilized potting soil — not soil taken from outdoors. Sterilized soil can be purchased at your local lawn and garden shop. Read the label carefully to make sure the soil contains the right mixture of loam, peat or sand needed for your particular plants.

If you find you cannot take your plants along, consider taking cuttings. Wrap cuttings in wet moss and newspaper then place in unsealed ziplock bags. Place bags in a carton and fill in around them with light packing material. The cuttings should survive several days' travel and be ready to take root in your new home.

Preparing For The Move [\(top\)](#)

Now that you've decided which plants will accompany you to your new home, take proper precautions to help them survive the trip.

- **Three weeks before moving day** — Any plants in clay pots should be repotted in unbreakable plastic containers. The new pot should be big enough to hold the plant. Jumping pot sizes can cause plants to respond poorly.
- **Two weeks before moving day** — Prune larger plants for comfortable packing. Pruning will also produce healthy, bushy, compact and more attractive plants. A common pruning method is simply pinching back newer growth with your thumb and forefinger. Succulents (e.g., cacti, jade plants) and ferns do not respond well to pruning.
- **One week before moving day** — Insects and/or plant parasites should be eliminated. Insecticides may contain harmful chemicals. Use them with care and always follow directions on the label.
- **Two days before moving day** — Plants should be watered normally. In winter months, overwatering may cause plants to freeze. In warmer weather, overwatered plants are subject to damaging fungus growth during transit.
- **Moving day** — Pack your plants this morning or the night before. Conventional packing cartons are good for moving plants. A dishpack, available from your Atlas representative, has dishes/glasses compartments that easily adapt to holding plants.

As you pack your plants, anchor them securely to prevent slipping when the box is lifted or jostled in transit. Place the pot in a box, making sure it fits snugly in the bottom, and use paper around the base of the pot to hold it in place if necessary. Next, cushion branches and leaves of the plant with soft paper.

Your final step is punching air holes in the sides of the box and loosely fastening the lid. Set the boxes upright and clearly mark the lids to avoid mistakenly putting them into the van with the furniture. If you follow this procedure, your plants will be ready to travel safely up to three days before requiring further attention.

- **On the road** — If possible, avoid putting plants in the trunk of your car. Heat or cold and lack of fresh air can cause damage. Try to load the plants as close to your departure time as possible. Set the boxes in your car where they will avoid being crushed. In warm weather, during periodic stops, try to park in shaded areas and crack a window. Likewise, in cold weather, avoid letting the temperature inside your car become hazardous to your plants.

More than likely, there will be no need to water your plants in transit. If they seem unusually dry, water them at the first opportunity. Otherwise, postpone watering until you've arrived at your new home.

If you're on the road for more than three days, your plants may require light. When staying overnight along the way, it is a good idea to bring plants indoors for the night and open cartons to expose plants to the light.

Arriving At Your New Home [\(top\)](#)

When you arrive at your new home, unpack your plants as soon as possible. Remove them through the bottom of the box to avoid breaking leaves and branches. Try not to move them around too much afterwards until they become acclimated to their new home.

With the proper attention and care, your plants will flourish in their new home. And you can settle more quickly, more comfortably into your new surroundings with your favorite plants around you to admire and enjoy.

Caring For A Specific Plant [\(top\)](#)

Philodendron	Leaves droop	Too hot and dry / soak thoroughly, move to a cooler spot.
	Leaves turn yellow	Too wet / check drainage holes, let dry between waterings.
Ficus	Leaf drop	Too wet / allow soil to dry before watering. Too cold / move to brighter, warmer place.
Dieffenbachia (dumb cane)	Brown leaves	Hot, dry air / use cool mist humidifier.
	Lanky leaves	Too dark / move to brighter spot.
Boston Fern	Spindly fronds	Pot is too big / let it get root bound. Fertilize.
	Brown fronds	Dry air / use cool mist humidifier.
African Violet	Spots on leaves	Water on leaves / remove spotted leaves, water plant from the bottom to avoid getting water on leaves.

	No flowers	Too dark / increase light intensity and fertilize.
Aloe-vera	Leaves topple over	Too rootbound / repot, or divide plant.
	Leaves wither	Too dry / water a little more often.
Dracaena (dragon tree)	Leaves droop	Direct sun / move to more filtered light.
Parlor Palm	Brown leaf tips	Dry air and soil/mist and increase water.
Schefflera	Blackened leaf tips	Soggy soil / reduce water.
	Leaf drop	Cool air / move away from drafts.
Spider Plant	Brown scorch marks on leaves	Leaf shine damage / clean with pure water
	Rotting in center	Too wet / allow to dry before watering.
	Brown leaf tips	Too hot & dry / move away from direct sun, water more often.