



**Virginia Green Industry Council**

For Immediate Use

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Electronic Version:

[www.viriniagreen.org](http://www.viriniagreen.org)

## **Repotting Your Houseplant**

Now that all of the holiday decorations have been taken down and stored away for another year, it is time to turn your attention to your houseplants. These traditional favorites can help span the gloomy days of winter until the spring bulbs start blooming again.

The Virginia Green Industry recommends repotting when the plant's roots fill its container and begin growing out of the bottom. The size of the next pot is important. A good rule is one size larger than the current pot. For example, if you are using a five-inch pot, pick up one that is six inches. A too large pot can cause problems because the extra space will accommodate excess soil and hold more water than the roots can absorb. The result is root rot and decay.

Pots are made of ceramic, plastic and clay. There are benefits and drawbacks to each kind. Though breakable, clay pots provide excellent aeration for roots. The containers' porous walls take in and release moisture. Plants in clay pots need to be watered more often than those growing in plastic pots. Put clay pots on a plastic tray or plant saucer to protect the surfaces they are sitting on. Plastic pots are colorful, cheaper and lighter than clay or ceramic pots. Plants in plastic pots do not need to be watered as often.

### **Repotting Steps**

- Choose a potting medium with good drainage as well as some water retention properties.
- Put gravel or other drainage material into the bottom of the pot over the drain hole. Cover with a layer of potting soil.
- Remove the plant, by covering the soil with one hand with the plant between the fore and middle fingers. Holding the plant upside down, tap the edge of the container against a hard surface. This should loosen and knock it out of the pot.
- If the plant is root bound, unwind circular and entwined roots as much as possible. If the roots are too entwined, vertically cut them in several places, equally around the root ball.
- Scoop the new soil to the sides of the pot to make a place for the root ball in the middle and put the plant in.
- Fill in around the plant with soil but do not add soil above the original soil line.
- To firm or settle the soil, gently tap the pot against the side of a table or use your fingers to lightly press the soil. Never pack the soil too tightly.
- Water well until excess water drains out of the pot.

When you go container shopping, make your first stop the local nursery retail/garden center. Besides having the most comprehensive selection, the center will have experts on hand to answer questions about color, height, and design as well as repotting methods.

The Virginia Green Industry Council is the voice of the horticulture industry in the Commonwealth and is dedicated to enhancing the beauty of the state's environment, the well-being of our citizens, improving our state's economy, and improving the health and wellness for everyone in Virginia. The Council is made up of providers of horticultural products and services. The Council works to provide public and industry education, environmental guidelines and other information that will keep Virginia green and growing. For more information, visit [www.viriniagreen.org](http://www.viriniagreen.org). 540-382-0943 FAX: 540-382-2716  
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