



Got Fungus Gnats?

Get rid of this pesky indoor pest once and for all!

They're little, they're pesky, and if you have indoor plants, you've probably had problems with fungus gnats at one time or another. Fungus gnats are the most common complaint from houseplant owners this time of year, and are often confused with fruit flies. These little flying bugs are not harmful to your plant - or you - but they are annoying! The good news is: they're pretty easy to get rid of - as long as you follow through with the treatment.

Fungus gnats like warm, moist places; which is why they find your houseplants irresistible. They lay their eggs in the soil of your houseplants or in pot saucers, where they live as larvae for about 2 weeks. As an adult, they'll hang out anywhere water has collected and is sitting, especially in saucers, and go back into your plant soil to lay their eggs again. They're also attracted to carbon dioxide, which explains why they seem to always be up in your face!

One of the first steps to minimizing problems with fungus gnats is to provide a well-drained potting soil (**Warner's Potting Soil** is perfect) for all your indoor plants. You may need to remove old soil and replace it with new, fresh potting soil. To do this, very gently remove the plant from the pot, and shake excess soil off the roots very gently. You will not be able to remove all of the soil. Discard all the excess soil out of the pot. Clean the pot thoroughly with soapy water. Before you place the plant in the pot, spray the pot and the root ball with **Triple Action** (discussed later in this article).

Secondly, avoid overwatering! Your houseplants will need less frequent watering in the winter than during periods of growth. You will want to let the top two-to-three inches of soil dry out completely, so check each plant before you water to see whether they need more water. (To do this, stick your finger into the soil about one to three inches deep. If the soil feels moist, don't water).

Most importantly, do not let your plant sit in water. When you water, water slowly and watch the bottom of the plant carefully. As soon as you see water seeping out into the tray, stop watering. If that water is not absorbed within 15 minutes, you'll need to dump it out. If your plant is small enough, I suggest watering in the sink.

The next step you can take is to add a 2-3 inch layer of fine sand on the top of the soil. The sand will help because it remains dry, even when your plant is fully watered, and the gnats won't burrow into it.

If reducing your watering and adding the sand don't cure the problem, or you aren't willing to wait until those methods take effect, we recommend **Ferti-Lome Triple Action** spray. This sounds like a scary chemical product, but it is, in fact, a natural solution derived from chrysanthemums and other natural ingredients. To use the **Triple Action**, spray the plant foliage and soil liberally. You may need to reapply after a few days, and again in a couple of weeks; as larvae are hatched. The great thing about the Triple Action is that it can be used on edibles, so it's safe on your indoor herb garden or veggie starts, up until the day of harvest!