

# Winter care for your jade plant



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**Q**uestion: I recently inherited a rather large jade plant from my grandmother who lived in warm and sunny southern California. I am curious as to what steps to take to keep this jade plant alive during the much cooler Oregon winters. I plan on keeping it indoors year-round. Any advice would be most helpful.

**A**nswer: Originating from the arid regions of South Africa, the jade plant gained popularity in the Western world in the early 1900s. Succulent enthusiasts and botanists brought back specimens from their travels to South Africa.

Its botanical name, *Crassula ovata*, derives from the Latin word “crassus,” meaning thick or fat, referring to the plant’s fleshy leaves, and “ovatus,” which means egg-shaped, describing the shape of the leaves.

One fascinating characteristic of jade plants is their longevity. With proper care, they can thrive for decades, occasionally even reaching 100 years old!

Jade plants are known for their ability to withstand neglect and tolerate dry conditions. As indoor houseplants, they typically reach a height of 2-3 feet. However, if grown outside in ideal conditions, they can grow even taller, reaching heights of up to 5 feet or more. Their growth rate depends on factors such as light, temperature and pruning.

Known for its resilience and exquisite beauty, the jade plant requires specific attention during the colder months to ensure its overall health and vitality. By following a few easy tips during the winter months, your jade plant should flourish and bring joy to you throughout the year.

During the winter, it is crucial to adjust your jade plant’s watering routine to accommodate its changing needs. Since the plant’s growth slows down in colder temperatures, it requires less frequent watering.

Overwatering is one of the most common mistakes made when caring for jade plants. Excess moisture can lead to root rot and fungal diseases. To prevent overwatering, ensure that the soil is completely dry before watering again.

To determine if your jade plant is receiving the correct amount of water,



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observe its leaves. Overwatered plants may display yellowing leaves, soft or mushy stems and a foul odor. Under-watered plants show signs such as wrinkled or shriveled leaves.

Adjust your watering routine accordingly based on what you are observing. When in doubt, it is better to underwater than to overwater.

Since indoor heating systems tend to reduce humidity, it is important to maintain a suitable environment for your jade plant. To counteract dry air, consider placing a humidifier near the plant or use a pebble-filled tray with water under the pot. This will help create a microclimate with increased humidity, mimicking the jade plant’s natural habitat.

Jade plants thrive in bright, indirect light. During the winter, when daylight hours are shorter, it becomes crucial to ensure they receive sufficient sunlight. Place your jade plant near a south-facing window to maximize sunlight exposure. If natural light is limited, consider using grow lights specifically designed for plants.

These plants are tolerant of a wide range of temperatures; however, if you want to create an optimal environment, keep the following in mind. Avoid placing your jade plant near drafty windows, doors or vents because cold drafts can cause leaf damage and hinder growth. Maintain a consistent temperature between 60-75 degrees.

During winter, jade plants enter a dormant phase characterized by reduced growth. As a result, they require less fertilizer. Reduce the frequency of fertilization to once every two to three months, using a balanced, water-soluble houseplant

fertilizer diluted to half strength.

Winter is an excellent time to assess your jade plant’s overall shape and remove any dead or damaged leaves. Pruning not only promotes healthy growth but also enhances the plant’s aesthetic appeal. Use clean pruning shears to make precise cuts just above a leaf node. This will encourage new growth and maintain the plant’s compact form.

Although jade plants are relatively resistant to pests, it is essential to remain vigilant. Inspect your plant regularly for signs of common pests like mealybugs or scale insects. If you notice any infestations, gently wipe the affected areas with a cotton swab dipped in rubbing alcohol. The plants will need to be cleaned frequently for several weeks until all of the pests have been eliminated.

If you keep all these tips in mind, you will be rewarded with a healthy, thriving jade plant. Every time you look at it, may you have fond memories of your grandmother.

*Do you have a gardening or insect question? Contact the Douglas County Master Gardeners at [douglasmg@oregonstate.edu](mailto:douglasmg@oregonstate.edu), 541-672-4461 or 1134 SE Douglas Ave., Roseburg. Master Gardeners are trained volunteers who help the OSU Extension Service serve the people of Douglas County.*