Prepare houseplants for your vacation time

The weather has been brutal this winter, so many of you may be going where the sun is shining and the water is warm.

and the water is warm.

Tho question: What do I do
with my houseplants so they will
be in good condition when we
come home? The answer: There
are several things that can be
done to assure that the plants
will be healthy and hearty when
you return. you return.

You return.

Take care of all the grooming, repotting and fortilizing necessary a day or so before leaving, so watering is all the care that would be needed.

Most flowering plants also require plenty of light, so keep the window coverings the same as you do when you're home —dark rooms will surely cause the plants to lose leaves and produce

Be aware that sunshine beaming through windows can burn plant leaves, turning them brown. A sheer curtain or screen may help reduce the intensity of light.

If you are going to be away for only a week or two, especially during the winter when the ther-mostnt can be turned down to about 55 degrees, most plants

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Sunny disposition: The beautiful Kalanchoe, a succulent, doesn't need a lot of water. It likes a sunny location and dry winter heat.

will do very well with no additional care. Water each one well the day before you leave.

If you are going to be away for an extended period, set each pot in a plastic bag and tie it at the top, anugly around the atem or base of the plant. For added moisture, place pebbles in a tray and fill it with water. Set a pan of water next to a heat register so the warm air will cause the water

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to evaporate into the air.

Another tip: Put several layers of newspaper in a sink or bath-tub to protect the surface and to tub to protect the surface and to help retain the moisture. Run water to a depth of 4 to 6 inches, set the larger pots in the deeper end and the smaller ones at the shallow end. Don't allow the water to cover the top of the pots. It may be necessary to some of them on upturned pots. Close the shower curtain or door. Here's another idea: Insert wicks well into the soil at the base of the pot. Let the free end hang in an adjacent container of water so the water is transferred to the soil.

On the other hand, you could

On the other hand, you could enlist the help of a neighbor or friend who will come in and

If the person is also a gardener, you may not need to leave, you may not need to leave instructions. If the person doesn't know a thing about indoor plants, write specific directions for each plant. You may reciprocate by caring for your friend's plants when their family son vacation.

If you have many expensive specimen plants, you might wish to hire a professional. Who knows? The plants may be in better condition than when you went

away:
You may wish to rearrange
your plants before you leave so
that those with similar cultural
needs are grouped together. This
also would make it easier for the
plant sitter.

One little pruning tip that may need to be done while you are away concerns amaryllis. As the flower buds open, use tweezers to remove the pollen-bearing anthers before they begin to shed. This adds days to the flowering period, so you may not then miss the gorgeous show.

Speaking of houseplants, plan to visit Cranbrook Greenhouse, 380 Lone Pine in Bloomfeld Hills, noon to 5 p.m. Feb. 14. You will find a great variety of plants from which to choose. This would be a wondorful way to give a Valentine's Day gift with no colories!

ries!
Marty Figley is an advanced
master gordener based in Birmingham, You can leave her a message by dialing (734) 953-2047 on
a louch-tone phone, then 111,
then 3446. Her fax number is
(248) 644-1314.

CLUBS AND CLASSES

LIVONIA
Flower arranging, with an emphasis on petite designs, will be discussed at the next meeting of the Livonia Garden Club at 7:30 the Livonia Garden Club at 7:30
p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 6, at St.
Andrew's Church. The speaker is
Gratchen Pugsley, a flower show
judgo, who is also a member of
the Hill and Dale Garden Club of
Farmington Hills.
CLASSES

CLASSES
The Michigan School of Gardening, 29429 Six Mile, in Livonia offers a vertey of sub-jects. Register in advance. Classes are limited in size. Here is a list of some of the classes: Lawn Pest Managoment, 9:30 a.m. of 6:30 p.m. Jan. 29. Identify and diagnose common diseases and pests of lawns, Learn managoment techniques and control strategies and lawn care without pesticides. Call (248) 4-GARDEN for Informa tion on fall and winter classes, times and costs or click on www. michigangardening, com

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