Prepare houseplants before going away

Plan around how each pot actually dries. Try the arrangement before leaving and explain what to check, instead of adding a large reserve of water at the last moment.

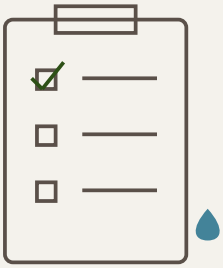
Applies to: For ordinary indoor plants in potting mix with drainage holes. Cacti, succulents, hydroponics, reservoir pots and unwell plants need a separate plan.

01



Prepare each plant

02



Test equipment first

03



Arrange condition checks

Original teaching diagrams, not species photographs. Scale and moisture shading are illustrative.

01 Observe each pot before departure

While you are still home, observe how each pot changes between waterings and record its species, container and usual moisture check. Try the curtain and air-conditioning arrangements planned for your absence. Pots in different positions or of different sizes may dry differently, so one household watering rule is not enough.

02 Check first; do not double the water

Before leaving, check each pot and water normally only when its species and moisture condition call for it. Let excess water drain and empty saucers or outer pots. Do not double the water or leave ordinary pots standing in it. Reduce excessive heat exposure while keeping appropriate light available throughout your absence.

Put it into practice

03 Practise the check with your helper

Practise a moisture check with your helper and show which pots need attention, how to drain them and which should be left alone. Visits are for checking, not automatic watering. Leave plant references, photos and contact details. Ask the helper to report a drooping plant with wet mix before adding water.

04 Trial watering equipment before using it

Before using a dripper, wick or capillary mat, check that it suits the plant and pot, then trial it while someone can observe. Look for leaks, excessive wetness, displaced wicks or an empty reservoir. Arrange a backup check. Avoid relying on untested equipment or repotting solely for a short absence.

Three things to remember

1	Observe pots under the planned absence conditions
2	Check each pot, water as needed and drain
3	Practise with the helper and trial equipment

Pause and ask for help

If a plant already has root rot or severe leaf loss, or a trial keeps its mix too wet, stop that watering setup. Check the care plan with Plantshop and arrange personal inspections.

Sources and use

Use this general lesson alongside the matching plant care guide. Substrate, pot system and conditions change what is appropriate. Sources checked: 30 October 2026.

1. RHS — Houseplants: holiday care
2. Penn State Extension — The Gear Your Houseplants Really Need
3. University of Illinois Extension — Houseplants: Watering