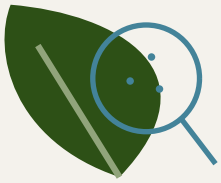
Suspected pests: inspect leaves, joints and potting mix

White specks, sticky patches or small flies are clues, not a complete identification. Inspect systematically before choosing a treatment.

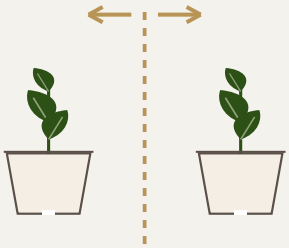
Applies to: For inspecting and initially separating ordinary indoor potted plants with suspected pests. This lesson gives no pesticide recipes or guaranteed identification from photographs.

01



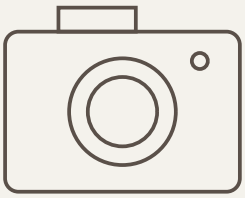
Inspect undersides and joints

02



Separate suspect plants

03



Photograph before treating

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

01 Separate the suspect plant

Place a suspect plant where its leaves cannot touch other plants, while maintaining suitable light. Care for unaffected plants first and inspect the suspect plant last. Clean tools afterwards and avoid sharing leaf-wiping cloths. Separation helps limit spread, but it must be followed by repeat inspections rather than treated as a complete solution.

02 Inspect undersides and leaf joints

In good light, support each leaf and inspect its underside, main veins, new growth and the point where its stalk meets the stem. A magnifier helps reveal moving specks, fine webbing, cottony material or sticky deposits. Photograph details before touching them. White marks may be residues, so avoid scraping and damaging an unidentified mark.

Put it into practice

03 Check the mix and neighbours

Look for persistently damp mix, decaying fallen leaves or small insects that fly up when watering. Remove loose dead leaves and check for water sitting in the saucer. Small flies alone do not prove root rot. Inspect nearby plants in the same places and record the extent of findings instead of assuming every white speck is an insect.

04 Keep evidence and recheck

Take a whole-plant view, both sides of affected leaves and close-ups of the clues. Record locations and whether numbers increase. Smooth leaves may be gently wiped with a soft cloth dampened with plain water; seek advice for hairy or delicate leaves. Continue separation and inspection after cleaning, without improvising sprays or cleaning mixtures.

Three things to remember

1	Separate the suspect plant
2	Inspect undersides, leaf joints and mix
3	Photograph clues and inspect again

Pause and ask for help

Keep plants separated and contact Plantshop for identification help if signs increase, fresh damage continues or several plants are affected. Do not improvise treatments before checking the pest and plant suitability.

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. University of Minnesota Extension — Managing insects on indoor plants
2. Clemson Extension — Common Houseplant Insects & Related Pests
3. RHS — Mealybug