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A Basic Guide to Growing Coffee Trees

Looking at growing your own Coffee beans? Coffee Trees make beautiful indoor plants with large glossy foliage and white spring flowers which are often followed by red 'beans' or cherries. Coffee Trees are naturally understory trees or shrubs and so need high indirect sunlight but direct sunlight can cause the foliage to yellow and sometimes burn. When temperatures are below about 45-50F they should be brought indoors, otherwise they will do fine on a well shaded porch or patio during the warmer months of the year. This will also allow the bees to access and pollinate the spring flowers for bean production.

Like Gardenias, a close cousin, Coffee Trees need a moist, acidic, well-draining soil. Peat moss based potting soils can stay too wet and so we prefer to use a high quality, thoroughly decomposed, pine bark mulch based potting soil to which we add about 25% sand or small gravel to improve the drainage. In early spring you can apply a slow-release, balanced, acidifying fertilizer at the rate of about ½-1 teaspoon per gallon of potting soil. An example would be Scott's Osmocote™ 14-14-14.

When your Coffee Tree gets too large for its container you can up pot it to the next standard sized container. A 4" pot could be transferred to a 6", 6" to 10", and 10 to 14" or something similar. We generally replot in late winter or early spring before growth begins but it can be done at most any time of year although we do tend avoid replotting them in winter and late fall because growth stalls during this time typically.



Watch your watering carefully after transplanting as it is easy to keep the soil too wet which will cause root rot. Also, never allow your plants to stand in a saucer of water for any length of time. Excess water from watering should be emptied after 30-45 minutes or once the soil is fully re-saturated. Allow the top ½-1" of soil to become somewhat dry between waterings but not to the point of wilt. The way we check is to stick our finger in the soil to the first knuckle. If the soil feels dry and is at air temperature it is time to water. If the soil feels cooler than the air and moist then you should wait. In winter plants will go into a semi-dormancy and water usage requirements will drop significantly and so it is important not to over water during this time of year.

We hope this helps to get you growing and good luck with your Coffee Trees!

Thank You & Good Growing,
John, Bonnie, & Jeff McMillian
And the Crew at Almost Eden

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