

Ask The Plant Groom™ by Dale Groom, The Plant Groom™

QA1065

I have Japanese Boxwood hedges along the front of my house. One of these hedges (on the very end) turned brown, all over, and appeared to be dead. I removed the hedge hoping the others would be okay. Can you tell me what caused this and if the others will be safe? I did purchase another one to plant. Will it be okay to plant it where the diseased one was located? Please help me with my hedge problem.

Thanks, - D. M.

The most likely cause of your described problem is insufficient soil moisture in the root zone for a prolonged period of time. I have observed similar conditions in a bed of boxwood at one of our favorite family-owned café/restaurants. The plants that survived are recovering and breaking out with new growth.

Personally, I'd replant if boxwoods are what you wish to grow and be attentive to watering needs in the root zone this year.

I do not believe your issue is disease related but rather cultural. However, if you want to confirm or eliminate the possibility of a pathogen problem my office will send you a free Plant Disease Diagnostic form if you wish. To secure a form send your request to me and include a long stamped self addressed envelope. Here's the address; Dale Groom, Plant Disease Form, Texas Cooperative Extension, 10056 Marsh Lane, Suite B-101, Dallas, TX 75229.

I need to trim back two Azalea beds and I am wondering now that blooming season is over is this a good time to trim these bushes? – J. H.

Yes. This is also a good time to apply fertilizer if needed and mulch. Maintaining a 3-4" deep mulch in azalea beds year round is highly recommended.

Which dwarf Nandina stays red all year long? – P. C.

One of if not the most colorful dwarf nandinas is 'Firepower'. I love it! Judy, my child bride of 36+ years and I both enjoy its' colorful foliage year round. Our 'Firepower' planting is on the west side in a bed approximately 12' from the wall. Try it because I believe you will like it.

We also grow the common tall growing Nandina domestica, 'Compacta' and 'Gulf Stream' and enjoy them all but 'Firepower' is the favorite.

I am in need of help for my beloved Peace Lily (Lily). I received Lily from my Grandma's funeral a

year ago this past March. When I first got Lily she had 3-4 blooms and was in a rather small pot. I re-potted her into a 22" across pot after re-potting Lily she bloomed even more (16! Blooms).

When I got her I was watering her with normal tap water and she seemed perfectly fine with it in till around October- November. I started to notice her blooms dyeing off and her leaves starting to crinkle, curl up, some also have bite marks on the sides & the tips yellow and brown, so I changed her water over to distilled water. I immediately called my local nursery and they recommended that I just clip the ends off and water it, so I did and it all came back. Also, little baby leaf's that come up either dye off or they too have the same problem with brown on the tips.

I recently put 11 spikes of the Miracle Grow Plant Food and it looks like I still did nothing at all for her. I also noticed lately that she has not bloomed at all this year and when she does have a little bloom come up it die's off before it gets to be 2" tall. I know that this is the time of year for them to be blooming since I see other Peace Lily's blooming at the nurseries.

Lily sets up high on a shelf right up next to a big window that has sheers closed all the time and about 3-4 times a week I will open the blind's to let more sun light in for about 4 hours, she gets low lighting 98% of the time other then regular table lamps in the room on. I give her about 2 1/2 cups to 3 cups of water whenever her soil feels somewhat dry.

Like I said earlier that I notice other Peace Lily's blooming right now I have also noticed that they have much bigger blooms and leaf's on them then she does. Her blooms have never gotten to be any bigger then an inch tall & half inch wide. I wonder if I should repot her into a bigger/smaller pot? Should I get a different kind of pot with the draining tray? (the one she is in does not drain).

Do I water to much? I have done countless hours of research online and phone calls to nurseries and still can't get her better. This plant means a lot to me because Peace Lily's were my Grandma's favorite plant and because it came from her funeral, I am determined to keep it alive and healthy all year long forever. Thank you so very much for your time!! – S. R.

Here's what these beauties need and my suggestions. They need; bright filtered light and moist soil to bloom well. Blooms as well as leaf sizes are determined by variety and culture. Some varieties will always have small blooms while others may be hand size or larger. Do not over fertilize. Always read and follow label directions when using any garden aid. While these plants will burn in direct sun best bloom occurs in bright filtered light. No repotting for your situation is recommended. It is a standard recommended practice to remove brown leaves with a shear.

I've grown these puppies for (35) years and currently have one in my office in a container without drain holes. Do not allow the plant to become dry but do not keep the soil wet. "Moist" is the key word here. During the growing season more frequent watering is usually needed while less will be utilized during our dormant season. So, don't water by a preset schedule but do water as needed to maintain a ... moist soil in the plant's root zone. Moisture management is critical for healthy growth and bloom.

I understand the tie with this plant because our native 'Turk's Cap' hibiscus and 'Bouncing Bet' plantings were starts from my Granny Miller, a sweet soul person that loved plants and gardening. Granny has been gone close to two decades but her plants ... live.

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