

## Care Instructions for a Streptocarpus

These care instructions are written specifically for streptocarpus plants. Other growers may have different care requirements for their plants based on how they have grown their streps. .

Rule No. 1: Let the planting medium lightly dry between waterings. Streps can survive a short drought, but they don't recover from drowning. Use lukewarm or tepid water when watering because cold water can cause unsightly marks to appear on the leaves. Nobody enjoys a cold shower. Do not let the plant sit in water, it must be well drained.

Rule No. 2: Give the plant the proper light. Morning or soft late afternoon light is best. That means an East, West, or shaded North-facing window. Avoid direct sun during the harsh hours of the day.

Rule No. 3: Regular meals during the growing season, please. From October through March fertilize every other watering. Use a fertilizer with a balanced formula (10-10-10 or 20-20-20 or thereabouts) mixed at ¼ to ½ the usual strength. Strep roots burn easily from too much fertilizer, so it is prudent to underfeed rather than overfeed.

Rule No. 4: Your plant is potted in a peat based potting mix but any soil-less mix will be fine. The best is 50/50 good grade potting mix with a peat based mix. You can repot your strep every nine months or so. Increase the pot size only if you must and then by the smallest increment possible. Avoid deep pots; they will hold too much moisture. Avoid terra cotta pots; the roots will glue themselves to the porous pot and suffer too much damage when you repot. Moisten the mix prior to removing the plant from the old pot. It will just be that much easier to remove the plant without ripping the roots. Moisten the new mix before planting. Pot the strep so that the mix is firmly in the pot but still airy. Remember to pot the plant so that the crown of leaves sits just above the potting mix surface.

Rule No. 5: Remove spent flowers. In particular, do not let spent blossoms drop onto the leaves and lay there. This will invite rot and disease. Remove old, yellowed, or unhealthy leaves. A clean plant is better able to remain pest and disease free. Your strep will get brown leaf tips, particularly in the autumn. This is natural, but I would still remove the brown tips. If you use anything to cut leaves or stems, please sterilize the instrument first.

Rule No. 6: Keep the plant in its comfort zone. It is happy in the temperature range between 10C and 25C. It is well suited to normal house temperatures.