Many common houseplant problems occur with faulty culture. However, similar symptoms can result from different causes.

SYMPTOMS

POSSIBLE CAUSES:	FOLIAGE: tips or margins brown	FOLIAGE: bends down, curls	FOLIAGE: yellowish	FOLIAGE: oldest drops	FOLIAGE: all drops	FOLIAGE: spots	FOLIAGE: wilts	GROWTH: long, weak, thin, soft	GROWTH: new leaves small	GROWTH: none develops	GROWTH: plant dies	GROWTH: stunted	FLOWERS: fails to develop - bud drops	FLOWERS: color less intense	FLOWERS: declines too fast	FLOWERS: becomes smaller	FLOWERS: no blooms
Excess light, i. e. exposure to direct sun can be too intense for many plants	X	X	X			X		X									
Insufficient light impairs photosynthesis and flowering			X	X	X			X		X	X		X	X		X	X
High temperature, especially at night, reduces growth and vigor, detrimental for flowering	X		X	X					X				X	X	X		X
Low temperature, especially continued exposure, is adverse to growth of plants	X			X						X	X		X				
Overwatering or **poor drainage** reduces soil aeration; roots die or water and nutrients are not absorbed	X		X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X			
Lack of water is a most limiting factor of growth	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X		X		
Low humidity adversely affects the overall health and vigor of most plants	X				X				X								
Too much fertilizer becomes toxic and injures plant roots	X		X	X			X		X		X		X				
Lack of fertilizer causes a deficiency of nutrients required for plant growth	X		X					X	X				X	X		X	
Compacted soil reduces root growth and activity			X				X	X	X			X	X	X		X	
Drafts cause rapid water loss from the foliage and flowers	X		X	X	X								X		X		
Daylength controls flowering of some plants (photoperiodism)													X				X
Air pollution including an excess of manufactured or natural gas from faulty appliances		X	X	X					X				X		X		

X X Cases when low leaves first turn yellow and fall. Injury usually progresses up the stem.
X With short internodes on the stem.
XX With long stem internodes on the stem.

Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
Nassau County

Nassau County
5 Old Jericho Turnpike
Jericho, NY 11753
t. 516-433-7970
f. 516-433-7971
nassau@cornell.edu
www.cce.cornell.edu/nassau

A-1-20 DWM:cms reviewed RT 1/03

Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities
Cornell Cooperative Extension in Nassau County provides equal program and employment opportunities.