

Terrarium 101

A simple breakdown of your terrarium needs With common issues and how they are resolved

# Open terrariums

Your terrarium will generally need bright, indirect light low humidity and manual watering dependent on which types of plants you have in your terrarium (see plants list for more information).

Here are some common issues that target open terrariums and how they can be fixed/prevented in future. `

-Yellowing plants- Overwatering is the most common issue for open terrariums. To prevent this, check the amount of water your individual plants need and let the soil dry out completely before watering again. If it’s too late and you notice your leaves are yellowing and wilting but the soil is still moist, these are the steps you need to take.

First, check the root system for signs of rot. Rotting roots are slimy and black whereas healthy roots are strong and white. Any rotting, dead or dying matter will have to be removed, the whole plant if necessary. If the roots are rotting, any soil around that area will have to be removed and replaced as it can spread through and infect other plants in your terrarium. Then remove any dead or yellowing matter as this attracts pests which will latch on to the healthy plants. It is important to use clean, sharp tools when removing. Finally, let the soil completely dry out before watering again to deter any rot that might be left over. You can add small drops of water to the other plants in your terrarium every couple of days to keep them going but it is important to let the rotted root system completely dry out.

-Crispy dry plants- Although rare, underwatering can be an issue. Symptoms can be similar to overwatering so make sure to check if the soil is wet or dry before diagnosing. This can also be caused by sun exposure. To prevent this, make sure you’re giving your plants enough water and keeping them in the correct lighting conditions, check our individual plants list for more information on this. If it’s too late and your plants are already scorched this can easily be fixed by removing any scorched stems with clean, sharp tools and fully rehydrating the soil.

-Diseases and pests- Root rot is the most common disease and can be prevented by letting the soil dry out completely between watering. Succulents can be susceptible to spider mites which appear as tiny webs and discolored spots on leaves. Mealy bugs appear as cottony patches under leaves or on leaf joints, they cause stunted growth and malformed foliage and spread quickly. We recommend dabbing the pests with 70% isopropyl alcohol and removing the terrarium from any light sources for a few days after treatment. You can also use insecticidal soap but one application will not be enough, just apply to the underside of leaves once a day until pests are gone.

## Closed terrariums

Your terrarium should be self-sufficient. It will have it’s own cycle during the day where the water condenses on a morning and slowly trickles down the glass to provide its plants with a water supply. Only lightly mist your terrarium if you notice a significant reduction in condensation.

Here are some common issues that target closed terrariums and how they can be fixed/prevented.

-Glass constantly covered in condensation- This means that there is too much water in your terrarium which can lead to more severe problems like root rot and growth or mold/fungus. Take the terrarium lid off for a few hours at a time over a period of days until the terrarium is back in a daily cycle. Be careful not to release too much moisture at once or the humidity will decrease, and your plants will fail to thrive.

-Dirty glass- Green glass is a sign of algae which can easily be removed with a paper towel or damp rag, this can be caused by excess moisture or decaying matter which can be prevented by removing all dead plants and aerating as soon as the moisture levels get out of hand. If this is an on-going problem, you can improve air circulation by poking holes in the soil with a dowel. White streaks on the glass are caused by mineral deposits from tap water. Catch this problem early and it can be cleaned using lemon juice or vinegar (be sure to keep well-away from plants) and rinsed with rainwater or distilled tap-water. This can be prevented by avoiding using mineral water to water your terrarium.

-Overgrown plants- Mold can be caused by overgrown plants where the leaves are touching the glass. Keep your plants trimmed using clean sharp tools. Offcuts can be propagated to create beautiful new plants! Just check our plants list for information on how to do this. Plants should also be trimmed if they are overshadowing other plants and blocking their sunlight.

-Leaning plants- Plants grow towards their light source, if plants are starting to lean, trim them back to their center stem and turn your terrarium every few days to ensure regulated growth.

-Mold or fungus- High humidity levels make perfect conditions for mold growth. Prevent this by immediately removing any dead foliage and making sure there are no plants touching the glass. Make sure to not water your terrarium unless you see a significant reduction in condensation.