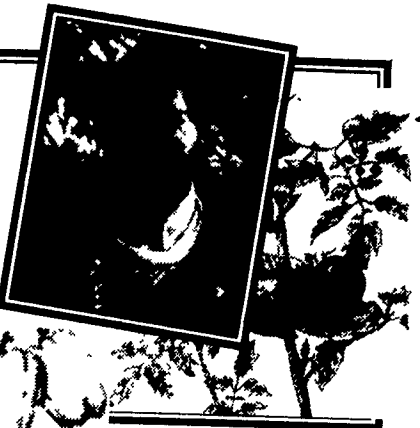


**All Gardens  
Great & Small**  
by  
York Co.  
Horticultural Agent  
**Tom Becker**



The growing medium should be fairly organic, but some good quality garden soil can be used to add weight. A ratio of equal parts soil, peat moss and vermiculite or perlite can be used. Avoid a mix that contains all garden soil, and make certain that your growing medium drains well.

Once the plants are established, any commercial house plant fertilizer will keep them in good condition. Liquid and soluble materials can be used at watering time. Slow-release materials can be incorporated into the growing medium. There are also "plant food spikes" available to insert into the growing medium at regular intervals.

These plants grow best in low light and may not require the same amounts of fertilizer as your other plants. A regular feeding program with a slightly higher nitrogen analysis can help increase leaf size, make the plants larger and

retain a deeper green leaf color. Philodendron is a heavy feeder under optimum environmental conditions.

One important environmental condition is moisture in the growing medium. Keep the root system uniformly moist at all times and never allow roots to dry out. Serious root injury causes yellowing foliage that eventually drops when too much or too little water is applied. If the plant seems to dry out too quickly, place it in a larger container and increase the percentage of peat moss in the growing medium.

To duplicate the plant's natural habitat you might also want to set it in an area with high humidity. Place a shallow tray of pebbles filled with water under the plant. The tray will collect leachate when the plant is watered and add moisture to the air.

Low light levels are essential for quality growth and foliage. In fact, direct sunlight causes yellow leaves or an irregular spotting. Improper watering and poor light conditions will spell disaster for philodendron.

Indirect light well away from a window is adequate. If you cannot supply any natural light, these plants will do very well in a mixture of fluorescent and incandescent artificial light. A daily illumination of 16 hours is enough to keep many species of philodendron growing for up to 12 months. If you do grow the plants in lower light, move them to a brighter location for a few months each year, especially in the winter.

Small leaves can result from under-fertilization, improper watering, a growing medium that is too hard and very low light levels.

Brown leaves can develop from the build up of salts in the soil caused by the overuse of soluble fertilizer. This is especially a problem if the plant is not watered well enough to leach accumulated salts from the growing medium. Drafts, poor drainage, overwatering, underwatering and no fertilizer will also cause dead foliage.

Yellow leaves that eventually drop result from a wet root sys-

(Turn to Page B14)

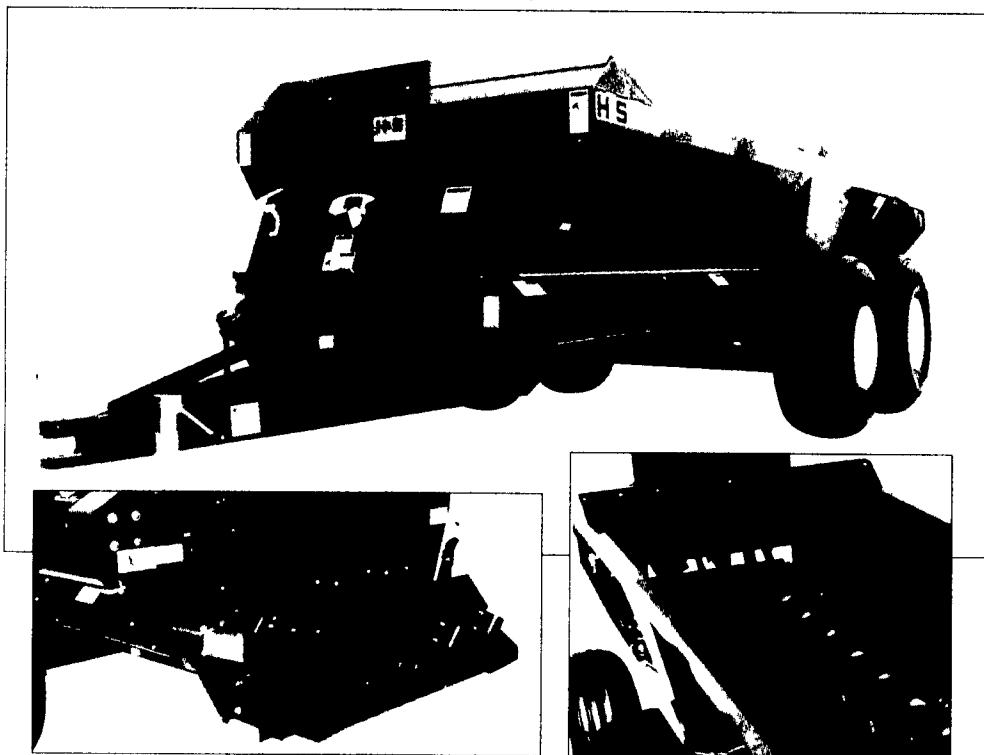
The leaves are falling off my Philodendron, what caused it to happen? Philodendrons are foliage plants adapted to most indoor environment. If you can provide a temperature of 65 degrees and keep philodendron moderately moist and out of direct sunlight, you should be able to grow them. The philodendron is native to

the tropical jungles of Central America. Most species are vines, and the leaves vary from 3 inches to 3 feet in length. Some species are self-heading and require no support.

Philodendron will grow in a variety of materials. Pure peat moss or the newer soil-less mixtures of peat moss and vermiculite or peat and perlite all work well.

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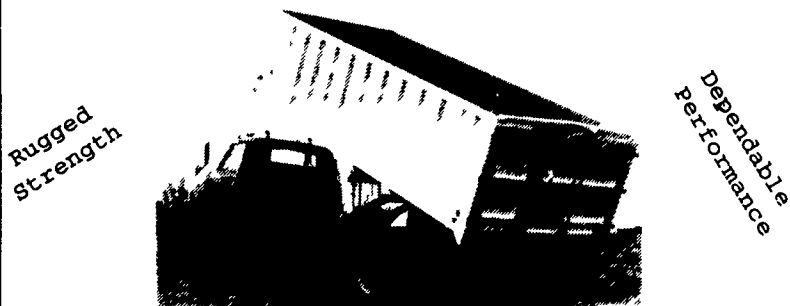
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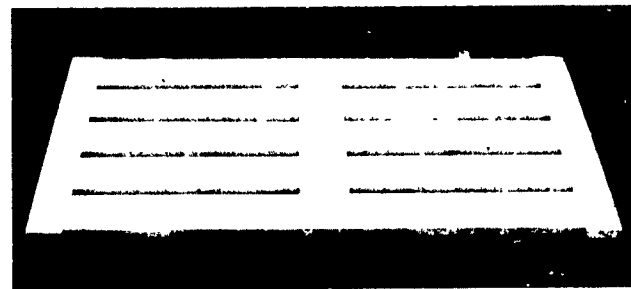
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