

## We're here to help!

*Fungus gnats may have hitchhiked their way inside from a patio plant, or perhaps were readily available in your "Deluxe Potting Soil" that was used to repot your philodendron.*

*These small insects are usually more of a nuisance than a threat to plant health. Come see us for effective products that will help rid your house of these unwelcome pests.*

**GNAT  
FREE  
ZONE!!!**



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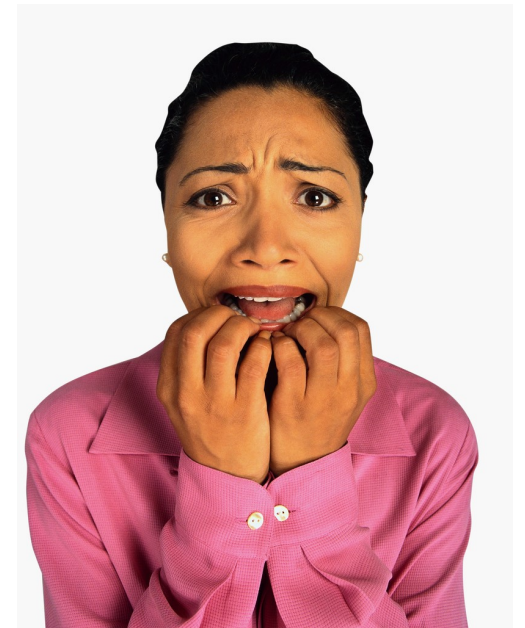
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## Fungus Gnats on Houseplants

How to Control  
These Unwelcome Pests



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## Those aren't fruit flies!

If you've had houseplants for any length of time, you've probably had fungus gnats at some point. They look like tiny black fruit flies in and around your houseplants.

### Fungus Gnat Life Cycle

Fungus gnats feed on fungi or organic matter in the soil. The adult gnat lives for about a week, laying up to 200 eggs in moist soil. Eggs hatch after a few days into larvae, which spend the next few weeks feeding on the fungi. Larvae develop into pupa, and finally into the winged creature that demands a call to Phelan Gardens for answers.

**So how might you rid yourself of these pests? Here are a few suggestions:**



### Yellow Sticky Traps

Small infestations can be detected and controlled using monitor cards which are small, yellow sticky traps that capture the flying

adult and interrupt the life cycle. This is a great way to determine if one plant in

particular is heavily infested. If so, you can then move this plant away from your other pots until you get the problem under control.

### Change Your Watering Habits

Often, we get more calls about fungus gnat problems during the winter months. Houseplants typically don't drink as much during this time of year, so adjust your watering accordingly so that your plant is not continually wet.

If you have the type of plant that can go drier between drinks, allow the soil surface to go slightly dry between waterings. Provide a thorough drink for your plants, but allow them to achieve a slight wilt before the next drink. Also, make sure that the plant tray underneath the pot does not continually contain standing water.

### Use Sterile Soil

Fungus—the food fungus gnats are seeking—grows on decomposing organic matter. So, if your potting soil contains a lot of wood pieces or bark, you are more likely to have problems with gnats.

We recommend peat-based Ferti-lome Ultimate Potting Mix as a sterile soil and all around great



option for most houseplants. In many cases, you can simply remove the top one inch of soil from containers (where the majority of fungus gnat eggs/larvae reside), and replace with fresh sterile potting soil. However, if you initially potted your plants in non-sterile soil with lots of wood chips, it may be necessary to replace all of the soil to eliminate the gnat's food source.

Another trick is to replace the top one inch of soil with play sand. Fungus will not grow on sand thus making this an effective way to get rid of many of the pests waiting to emerge from your soil.

### Consider A Pesticide

For larger infestations, you can use a pesticide that contains BTi (*bacillus thuringiensis var. israelensis*). BTi is a biological pesticide that controls gnats by destroying the larvae (worm stage). There are some BTi products specifically labeled for fungus gnats.

Alternatively, you can also use 'Bonide Systemic Houseplant Insecticide' as an all purpose defense.

