



Tips to keep Tulsi Healthy while growing 'Indoors'

The most common problems to look for regularly are:

- ***Over watering***
- ***Spider Mites***
- ***Fungus or Powdery Mildew***
- ***Not enough light from the sun or grow lights (she requires 12-14 hours daily)***
- ***Soil and pot that does not have good drainage***
- ***Make sure the room she is in is warm and has good ventilation or a fan to circulate the air. Fungus can set in if the room is cool and stagnant air, Her leaves will curl or drop if the room is too cool or cold.***
- ***Not giving her enough fertilizer***
- ***If you do not cut Tulsi's manjaris (flowers), She will grow too tall and will not become bushy***

Symptoms of over watering:

**Tips or the center of her leaves turn brown or black*

**In an advanced case of "root-rot", whole branches or whole plant will be look wilted (this can be misunderstood as needing more water)*

**make sure she is in a pot that has good draining' indoor' potting soil with a slightly larger draining tray under her.*

**When watering, water thoroughly until water comes out the bottom of the pot. Do not water her again until her pot becomes very light weight. This gives her roots some time to get some oxygen in the soil while she is almost dry. When her pot becomes very light to lift and she may even slightly wilt, water her thoroughly again until water drains from the bottom into the drain tray underneath her. Note: Do not let extra water sit in her tray, once she has drained the excess water, empty the tray so she can begin to dry properly and not create 'root-rot' or mold developing in tray or surface of her soil.*

Symptoms of Spider Mites:

She becomes very pale and when you look on the underside of her leaves, you will see a white matter coating along the main veins of the leaf. (these are the small spider eggs) Also, if you look carefully with a magnifying glass, you may see microscopic spiders crawling on the back of these leaves. If you hold the leaf up to the light, it will appear to have light speckles. If left untreated, it will spread and she will soon perish. So, if you are checking her daily and notice these symptoms, spray her with **'End-All' Insecticidal soap by "Safers" (available at all garden centres, Walmart, Home Dept etc.) It comes pre-mixed 'RTU' (ready to use) or as a*

concentrate. Follow the instructions on the back of the bottle, making sure to spray all parts of the plant, including her main trunk and branches and especially under the leaves..Note: Be sure to cover her soil with a plastic bag, so as not to let the soap get into her soil

Note: So, remember to buy a magnifying glass if you don't have.

Symptoms of Fungus or Powdery Mildew:

When daily checking Tulsi, if you notice any white powdery or fuzzy patches on the upper side of her leaves, this means she has been attacked by mildew. If left untreated, it will quickly spread to the whole plant and she will not survive. As soon as you recognize that she has mildew or fungus, purchase some "Defender" by Safer's Co. which is available at the above mentioned stores. It also comes pre-mixed or in a concentrate that you will need to mix with water following the instructions. Spray the whole plant, removing any obvious affected leaves with fungus. **Remember**, once again to cover her soil with a plastic bags so as not to allow the soap into her soil.

Also make sure the room where she is not cool or damp but warm 70-80 degrees, with good circulation.

Also: DO NOT wet or spray her leaves with plain water except on the hottest days of summer. Any other time of year, it will cause fungus to grow.

***Symptoms of not enough sunlight or grow-lights:**

Tulsi plants thrive in the sunlight. In Canada, where the winters are long and less amount and strength of sunlight, Tulsi grown indoors, lack of sunlight MUST be supplemented with a grow light(s). Without sufficient light (not just "daylight", but Sunlight), many problems will develop. In trying to reach whatever little light there is, her branches will becomes long and very thin and weak. She cannot bloom with flowers (Her manjaris) without enough sufficient light. She will also become pale and drop leaves without enough light. She needs 12-14 hours a day of good sunlight or grow-lights. Some people say that they keep her next to a window, still she is so weak. To them I again say that unless it's a south-facing window without trees around to cause shade, simply daylight from any other facing window is not enough...not enough in the summer and definetly not enough in the fall, winter and early spring. In fact, in winter, you cannot put her too close to a window as it is too cold and she will suffer and exhibit those frost bitten symptoms. **We strongly advise that you do not take a Tulsi plant home to worship without investing in a proper grow light.** In Burnaby, many different styles of grow lights are available at **SOLAR Greenhouse and Garden Supplies**, 4752 Imperial Ave., (1½ blocks west of Nelson)in Burnaby. Their phone number is; 604-438-7244. All of their staff are very experienced and knowledgeable about their products. You can call them or better yet, visit their store to see the grow lamp(s) available. Tell them you are growing 'sacred or holy basil' (The botanical name for Tulsi). Describe the approx. size of your plant, the height of your ceiling, the size of the area you want to cover, whether to have it installed on the ceiling or portable (they can even adapt a light with a clamp so you can mount it anywhere). They also have the option of a timer device so that the lights will come on when you set, whether or not you are home. **Reminder:** Whether she is near a window in summer or under lights, **remember to turn her pot every few days** so that she will grow symmetrically on all sides. Otherwise she will grow only on the side facing the light.

***Note:** Buy a thermometer and keep it close to where Tulsi is situated. Try to keep the temperature in the room always between 70-80 degrees F or 23-25 degrees C.. (day and night)

ALSO: Arrange a special place for Tulsi, either in your pooja room or a place where you pray regularly. Do not put her in the family room where television is playing and mundane conversations may be going on. Remember, she is sacred and very dear to Lord Krishna. It would be an offence (Aparadha) not to give her the proper respect. So, pick out a suitable place in your home before you decide to bring a Tulsi plant home.

TRANSPLANTING OR RE-POTTING TULSI:

Once Tulsi has outgrown her pot and becomes 'root-bound', her growth will slow down or stop, it is time to put her in a larger pot. Follow the instructions in the handbook, making sure there are good drainage holes at the bottom of the new pot. Cover those holes with a curved or dome shape piece of broken clay pot. Then fill

the pot with about 2 inches of gravel or rocks (about the size of a dime or a nickel in diameter) for good drainage. Then add the new Indoor Sterilized Potting Soil, (a soil that also has good drainage is called "Sunshine Mix #4") leaving a space to place Tulsi. Press the sides of the pot Tulsi is presently in, Turn her on the side, and slowly slide her out being careful not to disturb her roots. Remove carefully any rocks at the bottom of her 'root ball' and any extra soil that comes off easily with disturbing her roots. Place her on the soil in the new pot and fill in all around her with new soil. Be sure not to place her lower in the pot than she was previously and cover her at the same level as before. Water her thoroughly. Make sure to have a drain tray under her that is a little bigger than the pot. Empty any excess water from the tray. Keep her away from bright light for a few days to give her roots a chance to adjust and then you can put her back to her light source and she will flourish.

Fertilizing: As Tulsi grows, she uses up all the nutrition (nitrogen etc.) in her soil. Thus, you have to replace those nutrients in order for her to be green and healthy. A sign that she is getting low on nutrients is you will notice her leaves are all becoming a pale yellow instead of green. So, to prevent this, it is recommended you fertilize her every two weeks during the spring and summer (as she grows faster at those times) and maybe once a month during fall and winter when her growth is less.) You can use **aged cow dung** (never used fresh cow dung as it will burn her roots) Mix 3 parts water with one part cow dung soaked overnight, or if not available use all-purpose Miracle-Gro and follow the instructions on the bottle for 'indoor potted plants'. The best way is to water her thoroughly the day before and then mix the fertilizer as recommended and water her with that the next day.

Giving her Fertilizer when she is too dry can affect or burn her roots...as she is very sensitive.

REMINDER: To properly pick Tulsi on a regular basis as described in the Tulsi Handbook. All Tulsi leaves must be **offered to Lord Krishna only**. Then one can eat them as Prasad. Diseased leaves cannot be offered, but should be buried in the ground outside in a special place you choose.

REMEMBER- do the following once or twice daily:

- 1) To lift her pot and see if she is getting lightweight and needs water
- 2) Pick all yellow leaves and cut any flowers (manjaris) or new buds.
- 3) Check for any bugs or mold on both sides of her leaves.
- 4) Clean any fallen or dried leaves from her soil and loosen the top soil with your hand.
- 5) Remember to turn her pot every few days so she grows evenly.
- 6) Check the temperature in her room and that she's getting enough light.

After reading this **along with the Tulsi handbook**, if you have any questions, please leave a message and your name and number (and the best time to reach you) at: **604-431-0950** and either myself, Rudrani or my husband Sananda will get back to you. Our email address is: sukumaran@telus.net

**Hare Krishna
Tulsi Maharani Ki Jaya!**

