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GREEN THUMB GARDENING



By **CHRISTINE COLE**

SOIL SALTS

Have you ever noticed a white deposit or crust develop on the soil surface or pot of your houseplants? If you have, it's an indication that there is a build-up of mineral salts in the soil. A build-up or accumulation of these salts can slowly damage a houseplant. They will burn the roots and any foliage that comes into contact with the pot. In extreme cases, leaf tips and margins will turn brown (scorched) and new foliage that develops could be distorted or misshapen.

Most mineral salts originate from the fertilizer fed to the houseplants, but they can also arise from tap water. Fertilizer given to plants may not always be completely used by the plant and over time they build up in the soil. Therefore, the more you fertilize a plant, or leave it in the same pot of soil, the greater the accumulation of salts. Obviously, a plant with visible symptoms of salt accumulation should not be fertilized. This would only make the situation worse.

At the first sign of salt build-up the soil should be leached out. Salts are soluble and can therefore be leached out of the soil. Slowly running water through the soil for an extended period of time would accomplish this. However, in severe cases leaching the soil will be of no value. The soil will have to be replaced with fresh soil.

Each week Christine Cole of Tuitman's Garden Centre and Landscaping, Highway 25, 1 mile south of Acton, 853-2480, will be presenting helpful tips and information to assist you in creating your garden show-place!

TUITMAN'S GARDEN CENTRE
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