

Pothos Yellow Leaf Diagnosis Chart and Care Checklist

FitInFlow.space · Based on Clemson, Wisconsin and NC State extension, RHS and ASPCA guidance. Updated October 2026.

1. Diagnose by pattern

What you see	Likely cause	Fix
Several soft yellow leaves, wet soil, black edges	Overwatering / root rot	Stop watering, check roots, repot in draining mix
Yellow then crispy, drooping, bone-dry soil	Underwatering	Water until it drains; soak 20-30 min if soil shrank
One or two oldest leaves only	Normal aging	Trim; no action needed
Pale, leggy, variegation fading	Too little light	Move to bright, indirect light
Bleached or scorched patches	Too much direct sun	Pull back or add a sheer curtain
Older leaves evenly yellow, not fed in months	Nutrient shortage	Feed every other month in spring and summer
Yellow with brown tips, white crust	Too much fertilizer	Flush soil with plain water; pause feeding
Patches after cold or near a vent	Cold or drafts	Keep 60-85°F; away from vents and cold glass
Speckles, stickiness, webbing, white fluff	Pests	Isolate, wipe, insecticidal soap per label

2. Root check in 8 steps

Step	Do this
1-3	Prepare clean scissors and fresh mix. Ease the plant out. Shake off old soil.
4	Sort: healthy roots are firm and pale; rotten roots are brown/black, mushy, sour-smelling.
5-6	Cut away rotten roots, cleaning blades between cuts. Repot in airy mix, one size up at most.
7-8	Water lightly, then wait for the top to dry. If few roots remain, root stem cuttings (1+ node each) in water.

3. Care basics

Light	Water	Temperature	Feeding	Repot
Bright, indirect	When top 1-2 in. of soil is dry	60-70°F night, 70-85°F day	Every other month, spring and summer only	Every 1-2 years

Pet safety: Pothos is toxic to cats and dogs (ASPCA): calcium oxalate crystals cause mouth irritation, drooling, vomiting. Keep vines out of reach. If a child swallows any, call Poison Control (US 1-800-222-1222). For pets, call your vet or ASPCA Animal Poison Control.

4. 4-week watering log

Date	Soil dry 2 in. down?	Watered?	New yellow leaves?	Notes

Potted plants do not meaningfully clean indoor air in homes (Cummings and Waring, 2019). Grow pothos for beauty, not as an air filter.