

Local

Plants need special treatment during holidays

By BARBIE WOELFEL
Battalion Staff

Plant lovers should make special preparations for plants that will be left in town over holiday periods, a Texas A&M horticulture expert says.

During the short Thanksgiving break, plants should be well-watered and then grouped together to increase humidity around plants, said Dr. Marihelen Kamp of the University's horticulture department.

"But remember — do not leave water standing in saucers because the root zone will remain wet, and roots will rot over a period of time," she said.

When plants are grouped together, moisture released dur-

ing transpiration from all plants increases the humidity in the area, Kamp said.

When plants are left without care for a few days — such as over the four- or five-day Thanksgiving break — another alternative to consider is constructing a mini-greenhouse. This is done by placing a large piece of clear plastic, such as a cleaner's bag, over the group of plants.

In the mini-greenhouse, plant transpiration will release enough moisture to serve as a water source for all plants. In effect, plants will be recycling water produced in transpiration, she said.

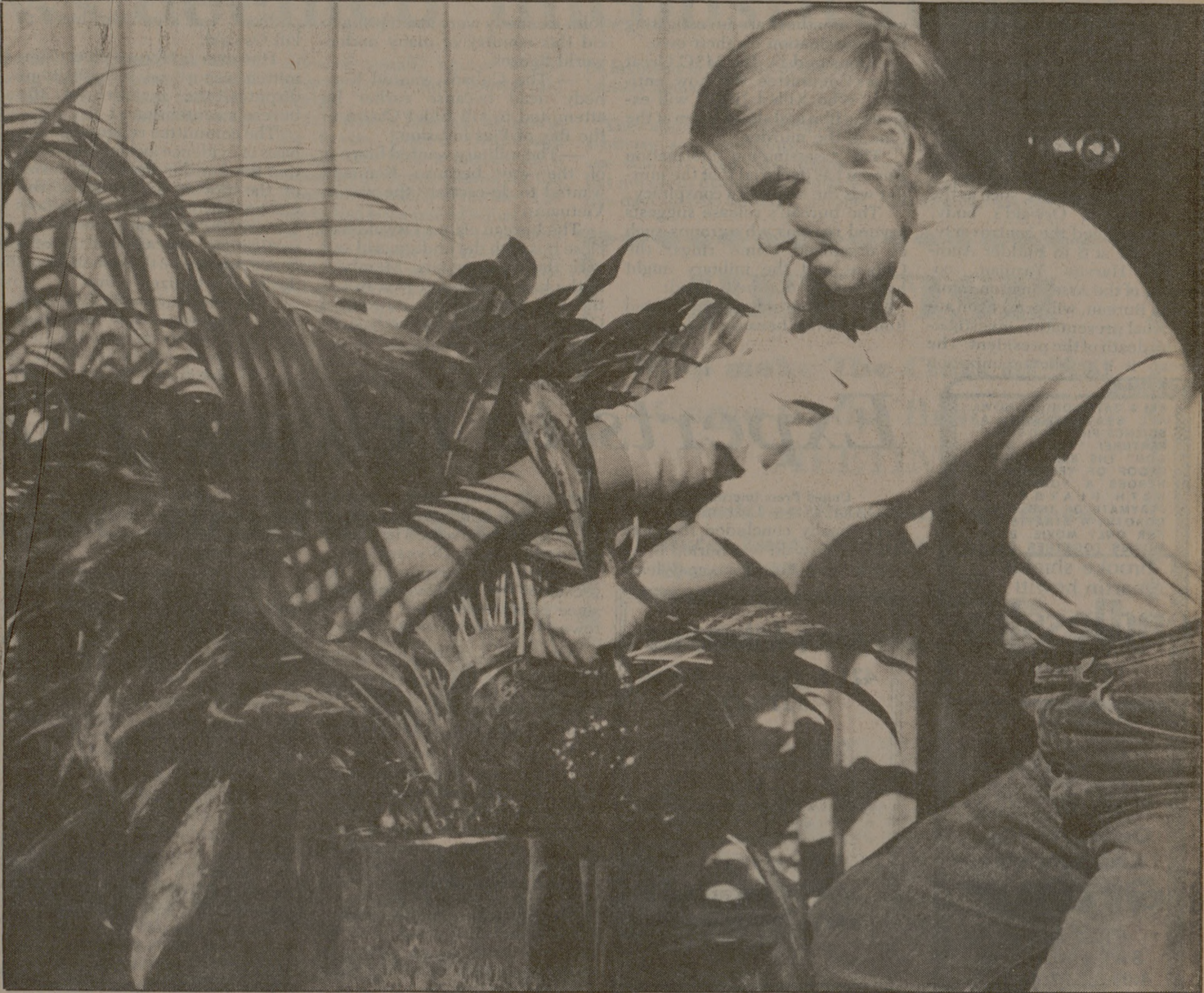
During the four-week Christmas break, plants should be grouped together, but placed in

trays with water and gravel lining the bottom. This technique also helps keep humidity around the plants, Kamp said.

For a more efficient watering system over the Christmas break, Kamp recommends the technique of wick watering.

"Take a strip of nylon or polyester hose, such as panty hose, and place it two-thirds of the way down in the soil to the root zone, and secure the other end of the hose in a water reservoir, such as a bowl of water," Kamp explained.

The plants automatically will absorb necessary amounts of water when needed. Larger pots may need more than one wick, whereas smaller plants only need one, she said.



Lisa Till, a junior floriculture major from Houston, waters her Chinese Evergreen. Staff photo by Rose Delano

Tender loving plant care gives grower green thumb

By BARBIE WOELFEL
Battalion Staff

Sometimes a college student's favorite roommate is a green, leafy philodendron or a flowering African violet. And just like human roommates, plants kept in dormitories and apartments need special care and attention.

Dr. Marihelen Kamp of the Texas A&M horticulture department stresses the need for correct lighting to keep foliage plants healthy. Kamp suggests placing plants as close to a natural light source as possible, depending on light requirements for each particular plant.

For example, low-light plants such as pothos, heart-shaped philodendrons, Chinese evergreens, and pathiphyllum, weeping figs, multi-leaf philodendrons and dracaenas, do well in low-lighted areas of dorms and apartments, she said.

The most efficient source of artificial light comes from a wide spectrum grow light that contains all the same light rays in the sun. These bulbs can be purchased at any store that carries an assortment of bulbs.

Fluorescent bulbs are preferred, she said, because they contain green and blue light rays, which are useful for plant photosynthesis. Incandescent light sources are the least desirable because they only emit wavelengths

of light that are red, and the heat build-up is great, she said.

"When purchasing plants," Kamp said, "select the size you want them to be since they will not grow much indoors." Inadequate lighting is the reason for this non-growth, she said.

When plants get thirsty for periodic waterings, Kamp recommends using rain water instead of tap water because Bryan-College Station water contains sodium chloride. Some plants are highly sensitive to salt burn caused by sodium chloride in tap water.

For example, dracaenas, air-plane plants and Swedish ivy will

Motivational film scheduled

By CATHY ANDERSON
Battalion Reporter

Suffering from end of the semester blues? To motivate Texas A&M students, the Department of Student Affairs will offer a film tonight, called "The Dimensions of Humanness."

The videotape will feature James Kerns, a professor from the

University of Minnesota, Monica Christen, area coordinator, said.

"It shows how a person's physical, spiritual and emotional well-being relate and react to things, and how they effect you as a person," Christen said.

People viewing the film may find they desire to set other goals and get more involved in activi-

ties, she said.

Those who do not have a spiritual life may find they need to fill gaps in their life by pursuing a particular goal, Christen said.

"We felt this was a good time to show the film because this is the time of year when many students feel down due to college pressures and may need motivation," she

said.

The film has never been shown to Texas A&M students before but was viewed by staff members and distributed to student government leaders and resident hall assistants last year, Christen said.

The tape will be shown from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in 203 Harington.

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