

**Ficus benjamina** (also known as weeping fig) are very temperamental and drop their leaves at when exposed to stress of any kind. Leave established weeping figs in place, moving them only when necessary, to avoid causing defoliation. Repot your weeping fig only when it becomes so root-bound that growth is negatively affected.

**For Ficus these conditions are optimal:** 1. light - indirect or filtered light, not direct strong light, 2. temperature greater than 60 and better greater than 70 degrees, 3. watering - moist soil, but not wet roots, so only water when the soil on top of the pot is dry. You can increase humidity by placing the pot on a saucer with gravel or small rocks then add water - the rocks keep the pot above the water level, and 4. fertilizer - decrease or even stop fertilizing in the winter, then increase to once or twice a month when growth starts in spring and they are growing fairly rapidly. A slow-release fertilizer will give your plant a steady supply of nitrogen.

**Know when to repot a ficus tree.** Look for the following signs that your tree needs repotting:

- roots growing out of the bottom of the pot
- roots in top 2"/5cm of the soil[1]
- new leaves come in smaller[1]
- overly-rapid draining when watered (a sign of root overgrowth displacing the soil); if it dries out in 1-2 days, it's time to repot.

Usually the best time to repot a ficus tree is in late winter or early spring.

Stop watering the tree for at least two days, this allows the soil to dry and makes removal easier.

Find a pot 1-2" (2.5-5cm) larger at the top than your current container. Deep is preferable to wide. The Library Foundation used a 4" wide plastic cup for starts - a 6" pot (width where soil will stop) would be the best size, about 6-7" tall.

Add a 1-2 inch layer of drainage material, such as gravel, sand, or rocks at the bottom of the pot (can put a small piece of newspaper first if drainage holes are not small enough to keep drainage material inside pot).

Add soil, compost, or potting mix, as desired, leaving enough depth for the transplant plus 2 inches.

Carefully tip the old pot on its side, then ease the root ball out of the pot by grasping the tree at its base. Pull from the base in a gentle rocking motion until the root ball is fully released. Handle the weeping fig as carefully as possible, with slow, even movements. Avoid excess shaking or bumping the plant against surfaces, to avoid extra stress.

Observe the root ball, looking for any black, mushy or damaged roots. Cut any such roots away with the pruning shears.

Supporting the base of the root ball and the base of the tree, lift the transplant into the new pot.

Place the weeping fig's root ball in the center of the new container. Add potting soil to the container, pushing it down around the root ball. Tamp the soil down firmly around the roots. Fill the container with soil until the soil level is even with the top of the plant's root ball..

Water thoroughly, until water runs out the drain holes. Add additional soil if necessary to fill in any sunken spots around the root ball. Try not to move your transplanted tree for a week, this allows the root structure to take hold in the new pot and minimizes trauma. Place the weeping fig back in its normal growing space.

**A good overview is available here:** <http://tipsplants.com/plants/house-plants/ficus-benjamina>