

HERB RESCUE

Find the symptom. Check the cause. Do the fix.

Symptom	Most likely cause	Fix
Yellow lower leaves	Overwatering or poor drainage	Let top inch dry before watering. Check drainage hole. Empty saucers.
Yellow all over, pale new growth	Hungry (no nutrients)	Half-strength liquid feed every 2 weeks. Hydro: refresh nutrients.
Tall, floppy, gaps between leaves (leggy)	Not enough light	Grow light 6-12 in above leaves, 12-16 hrs on a timer. Snip tops to rebush.
Wilting, soil dry	Thirsty	Water slowly until it drains. Bottom-water 20 min if soil repels water.
Wilting, soil wet	Root rot starting	Stop watering. Check roots: white = OK, brown and mushy = trim and repot in fresh mix.
Black or brown leaf edges	Cold damage or fertilizer burn	Keep basil above 50F, off cold glass. Flush soil with plain water.
Crispy, bleached top leaves	Light too close or too hot	Raise light a few inches.
Fuzzy white or grey on soil/sponges	Mold from wet, still air	Scrape top layer, water less, add airflow. Smart gardens: clean tank, lower water line.
White powder on leaves	Powdery mildew	Remove affected leaves, increase airflow, space plants apart.
Tiny flies around pot	Fungus gnats	Let soil dry out, yellow sticky cards, bottom-water.
Fine dots, webbing under leaves	Spider mites	Rinse undersides, insecticidal soap every 4-5 days for 3 weeks.
Fast tiny orange/thin insects, silvery streaks	Thrips	Rinse, insecticidal soap, blue/yellow sticky cards.
Clusters of soft green bugs on tips	Aphids	Spray off with water, soap if they return.
Flowers forming, leaves turning bitter	Bolting (heat/age)	Pinch flowers early. Cilantro/dill: resow every 3 weeks.
Seeds not sprouting / pods rotting	Old seed, cold, or too wet	Fresh seed, keep warm (70F), domes off once sprouted, no nutrients until true leaves.

The 3 golden rules

1. **Light first.** Most indoor herb problems are a light problem.
2. **Water by feel,** not by calendar.
3. **Harvest from the top, often.** Never take more than a third at once.