



# Why is my prized camellia dying?

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Master Gardener

A visitor to the OSU Extension Master Gardener Plant Clinic had a favorite potted camellia that had graced his front porch for many years. The camellia recently became scraggly and full of aphids. When we asked about how he had been caring for the camellia it was evident the plant was not watered regularly.

Irregular watering probably weakened its natural defenses. One solution is to attach the pot to a drip irrigation system so that a regular amount of water is delivered at all times. Nutrients in the original potting soil will deplete over the years also weakening the plant. You can buy fertilizer especially formulated for camellias and add it to the soil once or twice annually. In addition, you can mulch the camellia by adding 1-2 inches of well-aged compost to the soil surface. Mulch helps to protect the roots from temperature and moisture

variations. And finally, you can spray the camellia and other plants in the area each winter with a dormant oil spray to minimize the number of aphids and use an insecticidal soap spray during the growing season at the first sign of aphids.

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*Do you have a gardening question? Please email, call, or visit the Douglas County Master Gardener Plant Clinic at [douglasmg@oregonstate.edu](mailto:douglasmg@oregonstate.edu), 541-672-4461, or 1134 S.E. Douglas Ave., Roseburg. Douglas County Master*