

Identifying *hoya*

It's very **common** for *hoya* to be **mislabeled**. Sometimes they are mislabeled on purpose to sell a common *hoya* as a rarer (and more expensive) one. Before you buy a *hoya*, **make sure you know for sure that it's what it says it is**. **Search the label's name for photos** to make sure the **leaves match**; **trust collectors** / info websites **over nursery** / garden centre websites. If you can only find a name listed on nursery or garden centre websites, it's likely not real. I'd recommend using:

- **My Hoyas** - myhoyas.com
- **Vermont Hoyas** - vermonthoyas.com

Working out care needs

You can tell some info about a *hoya*'s care needs by looking at the plant:

Garden centres have better facilities for looking after higher need and tropical plants. So if the *hoya* you're looking at **has dead bits at the end of the stems**, that means that even they couldn't give it the humidity or temperature it needed. So **you'll need specialist equipment** to grow these (grow cabinets, humidifier, heating, etc.) None of the *hoya* listed opposite fall into this category.

Also check the condition of the **leaves** - **yellow or blotchy light green spots** indicate it's been **over watered** and the **roots are damaged**, which is about the worst thing that can happen to a *hoya*.

The **type of substrate** it's in will also affect its care needs. If it's in **normal soil** with no perlite or bark (unless it's a *carnosa* or *pubicalyx*) you'll need to be more **careful with watering** as the soil will be more moisture-retentive. *Hoyas* planted between **bark halves** (it looks like an actual cross-section of tree) have the opposite problem and will need watering by **soaking the whole thing** until enough water is absorbed. The **perfect substrate** for *hoya* in my experience **is a mix of soil, bark and perlite**. It's much easier and more forgiving when it comes to watering. So bear that in mind when looking at the plants in the garden centre.

Pot size

When you get home, **take the plant out of its pot to check the roots**. If there is a lot of **loose soil** around the root ball, **re pot** your *hoya* in a pot that's the **right size for the root ball**. *Hoya* like to be a bit pot bound.

Easy care hoyas

These *hoya* are common and really easy to look after; you won't need any special kit:

hoya carnosa

hoya pubicalyx

hoya memoria

(also called *hoya gracilis*)

hoya 'Rosita'



hoya memoria / gracilis

© Felix Horne



hoya carnosa

© Felix Horne



hoya 'Rosita'

© Felix Horne

General care tips

There is **no one size fits all care regimen** for *hoya*, but I think you can learn how to look after any *hoya* by **knowing two things**:

- its **usual habitat in the wild** (or that of its parents plants in the case of a hybrid). You can find out this with POWO: powo.science.kew.org
- the health of the **root system of your individual plant**. Plants are like people; you can know what to do in general, but you're still dealing with an individual and they will have their own special behaviours and needs.

Also, like all plants, *hoyas* **prefer rainwater** to tap water.

For advice on specific species and cultivars, I'd recommend:

- **Vermont Hoyas** (again - it's the best *hoya* site!) - vermonthoyas.com
- **Plantophiles** - plantophiles.com

Kit

If you're just growing **easy hoyas** (like those listed on previous page), you **don't really need any special kit**. But **in general**, I'd recommend getting a **humidistat** (most come as a combined digital thermometer / humidistat which is extra helpful) and a **spray bottle** to mist your plants. You don't need to buy a special spray bottle; you can (thoroughly) clean out an old household cleaning spray bottle for it.

What's my *hoya* trying to tell me?

Limp leaves = not enough light

Brown leaf tips or dried spots = too much light

Black spots under the leaves = too much water

Bloated, limp leaves = WAY too much water

Wrinkly leaves = not enough water or humidity (But also **sometimes = too much water**, to the point that the roots are damaged and the plant can't absorb water now.)

Dried out aerial roots = not enough humidity

Good luck! I hope you enjoy growing *hoya* as much as I do!

Felix