

TIPS

Taking care of your first plant

With summer in full swing, and infinite reasons to have green surround us, nothing beats the happiness of heading out to our nearest nursery to bring home some of that blooming goodness. But even though taking care of a plant is not as hard as a pet, it is not easy either, especially if you have never done it before.

Something most of us tend to do is to repot the new plants as soon as they change homes from the nursery into ours.



While that is not very harmful, it is not easy on the plants either. Let it adapt to the closed environment of your home first, give it a week before repotting. Not just that, frequent repotting is not recommended as it can end up damaging the roots if it is not done by a pro.

One of the easiest options for beginners is to go for succulents. But in contradiction to common belief, these do require some



care if you do not want them to face a tragic and slow death. The Kalanchoetomentosa or the Cactus are some of the most seen succulents and cacti here. And although most beginners might think they do not need as much water, it is not entirely true. They can survive for long times without it, but they are not indestructible. They need just as much water and sunlight to thrive, if not more.

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One of the easiest ways to kill your cacti is to put it in the wrong location. Always remember that succulents with a lot of colour like purple or red need more sunlight, and hence should not be kept inside for too long. On the other hand, green cacti can survive just fine with little sunlight.

Do not overdo it. Something most newbies tend to end up doing is



overwatering their plants till it practically drowns itself. Create a schedule, like only watering twice a week, thrice maybe if it spends a lot of time in the sun. Make sure to check the soil and its water concentration before going overboard with watering it.

Fertilizers are often out of the equation for plant care when done at home. While too much fertilizer can kill your plant, too little does the same. If your plant was in soil when you bought it, then it will not require fertilizer since the soil itself will provide the nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus. However, if your plant was one that was in a soilless potting mix, chances are it will need fertilizer to grow properly.

Always take notes when buying your plant. Simply asking the plant sellers will give you a ton of information on where to keep your plant, when to water and basically how to take care of it.

Giving up hope at the first signs to a troubled plant is something first timers might end up doing. Instead take time to see what it lacks, it could be fertilizer, proper sunlight or water, after all, they do not really require much.

By Anisha Hassan
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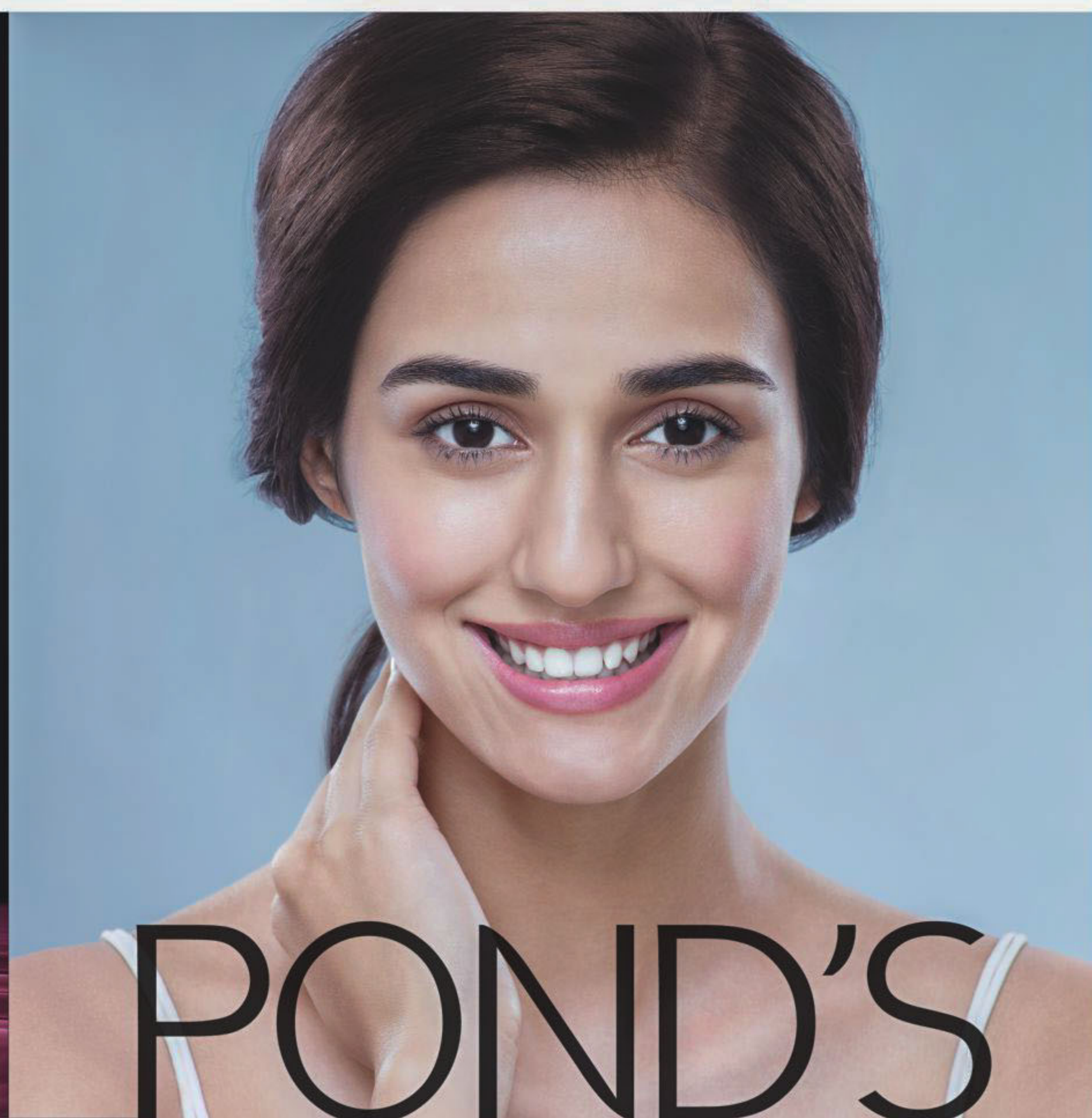
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