

Front Lines

5/1/2021

Plant Thievery

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If supply worries weren't bad enough, I've received multiple reports that thievery of rare and stock houseplants is on the rise. Take the folks at The Plant Parlor in Grand Rapids, Michigan, for instance. They posted this on the shop's Facebook page in late March:

"This is so disappointing that we have to post something like this. Unfortunately, while we were open this month, someone stole a Philodendron Mottled Dragon from our shop.

"We know, it might seem odd to post about the theft of ONE plant. It's a rare item and the price reflects that. Our retail markup is minimal and as a small business [the theft] is a significant hit. We are filing a police report, including the security footage and screenshots of the theft.

"The most upsetting part is not the monetary loss. Our number one goal with bringing in rare items isn't to make a sale. Most of the time we just like having them in the shop. We have a lot of plant lovers that enjoy seeing wish list plants in person. We LOVE being able to offer that and will absolutely continue to.

"Sadly, we have to beef up security; the rare ones are getting the 'Toiletries at CVS treatment.' We added additional cameras and purchased a plexiglass shield to cover the rare items shelf."

While those behind the heists may think, "Oh, well, it's just a plant," they likely don't realize that these plants are how people make a living. Especially true for the whole tropical/houseplant trade. Nurseries have been hit, too. Stock plants can be worth thousands and can set production back by ... well, a very long time depending on the plant.

What are you doing to protect your rare houseplants or wholesale nursery stock plants? Are you going the "behind locked glass" route? Cameras? Extra layers of security fencing? Drop me a note about it at

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