

Cultural Information – Theobroma
(thee-OH-broh-muh)

<u>Light:</u>	Full to partial sun.
<u>Temperature:</u>	Maintain indoor temperatures above 60° F.
<u>Humidity:</u>	Preferably 50% or higher; however, they will tolerate low levels with no harm.
<u>Watering:</u>	Bring soil to a state of visual dryness between watering. When watering, thoroughly saturate soil until a little water runs out of the bottom of the pot. Growing in a clay pot will help maintain a healthy root system.
<u>Fertilizer:</u>	Moderate feeders who need regular application once a week during active growth; ¼ tsp of fertilizer per gallon of water of a balanced fertilizer. Use a balanced fertilizer like a 15-15-15 or a blooming fertilizer like a 7-9-5. Discontinue feed in the winter.
<u>Pruning:</u>	Once flowering starts, lateral branches can be cut back, usually after fruit is set. Make sure plants get to be blooming size before prune.
<u>Insects and Disease:</u>	Susceptible to aphids and mealy bugs. Root rot can be an issue if kept too moist.
<u>Comments</u>	Cacao needs to get to be 4-5 feet in height, does not start flowering until the central stem divides and forks, and creates a multiple leader. The cacao flowers appear on the old woody trunk so do not prune back until flowers appear. They are self-pollinating but need to be hand pollinated in the absence of insects. The biggest cultural issues are edge burn, which consistently happens with cacao. It is generally not related to fertilizer but slowness in growth. It is not unusual to have brown edges on these plants. It can take 2-3 years to bring them to flowering size plants.