



Uncanoonuc Mt. Perennials

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From Tropical to Hardy – Overwintering Your Potted Ornamentals

Tips and Tricks for carrying your favorite containers from season to season

Those of you with a greenhouse or heated sunroom know who you are... for the rest of us there ARE options.

As Houseplants: If you have room by a bright sunny window (bright, indirect light is best for some) bring in your containers or take cuttings before frost. This works for foliage plants including Coleus, flowering plants including Parlor Maple, and herbs including Rosemary. (Note: dry air may make Rosemary hard to carry past the holidays.) Water regularly. Use little, if any, fertilizer over the course of the winter. Containers can once again be brought outside mid to late May, after danger of frost has passed. This is a great time to apply a slow release fertilizer. Be sure to water as needed.

In a Cool, Protected Spot: A basement or other dark, cool spot that hovers in the 50's and never freezes. Bring containers inside mid-October. Water once a month if soil feels dry. Plants will go dormant – expect them to drop their leaves. Bring outside mid-May, fertilize and water as needed. Works well for plants such as Angel's Trumpets & Bananas– plants that get more dramatic year to year as their size increases. Also works for plants such as Heliotrope and 'Escargot' Begonia, though these would benefit from a “jump start.” Move to a warm, bright spot six weeks or so before they can safely go outside. Otherwise growth may be so slow it's better just to treat them as annuals and replace yearly.

In a Cold, Protected Spot: This means a dark, cold spot like an attached but unheated garage (again, your plant needs to go dormant...) that hovers in the 40's, occasionally freezes but not for prolonged periods of time. Follow the same procedure as above – bring inside in mid-October, back outside mid-May. Works well for pots of true lilies, ferns, roses, clematis and pretty much any other containerized plant that's hardy to your zone. *Can use any type of container including terra cotta.

For the Great Outdoors: Large containers (the larger the better... think ½ barrel size or bigger) of specimen plants or mixed plantings that are left outside year round. Watering is only an issue through the fall. Works well for any plants that are hardy to a zone or, even better, two zones colder than where you garden. For us in zone 5, that means plants hardy to zone 3 or 4. The large soil mass protects the roots somewhat, but since the whole root zone is above ground and exposed on all sides, it is most successful with very hardy plants. Works well for specimen shrubs (Alberta Spruce, Hydrangea, 'Wine & Roses' Weigela) or large containers of mixed perennials (Sun perennials example: 'Kobold' Gayfeather, 'Zagreb' Coreopsis and 'Silver Brocade' Artemisia. Shade perennials example: Astilbe, Hosta and Lady's Mantle). *Containers must be frost resistant. Leave terra cotta pots inside.

A source for *GORGEOUS*, weather resistant containers:

Lunaform of Maine, phone # 207-422-3306, www.lunaform.com



Remember: Container gardening is a lot of fun. Experiment. Mix it up. And don't be dismayed if a plant doesn't make it through the winter. Don't take it personally. Make it an opportunity to try something new.

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