



Transitioning Tropical Plants Back Indoors for the Winter

Many tropical, citrus, and other weather-sensitive plants that have spent the summer months outside can be successfully brought back indoors for the colder months with the right transitioning and care. To make the process the smoothest it can be, with the least amount of shock to the plant, just follow these steps:

Don't wait until frost to begin the transition process! Watch your local weather forecast and move your plants to a shady part of your yard or covered porch *two or three weeks before you plan to move them inside.*

Citrus, gardenias, and orchids: These plants need some cool nights to trigger blooming, and they can handle night temperatures in the 40s before coming back inside.

Tropicals and houseplants: Most other plants should be moved indoors when night temperatures are consistently below 60 degrees.

PEST CONTROL: Before moving them back inside, inspect your plants carefully for diseases and for pests such as spider mites and mealy bugs. Carefully wash your plants in the shade with mild, soapy water (2 Tbs dish detergent/gal) or horticultural oil to help remove any unseen pests. An application of systemic insecticide will also protect plants for up to six weeks.

Continue to carefully monitor your plants throughout the winter for pests and treat as needed with surface treatments and/or systemics. Organic insecticides are available if you have pets or small children and want to avoid stronger chemicals.

TRIM: Trim your plants *as needed* to shape and maintain desired size. Give your plants a hard trim to encourage new growth next season. Remove any fallen leaves or other debris from the surface of your soil to reduce hiding places for insects and disease.

WATERING: Once they move indoors, plants generally require less water than they did outside, as long as the air in your house is not too dry. Most plants can be watered every 10 to 14 days.

When you do water, water thoroughly until water drips out the bottom of the pot. Do not let the pot sit in water, however. Pemberton's carries inexpensive rubber pot risers that are ½" thick to place between the bottom of your pot and your saucer. You could also use 3 or 4 wine corks, old pieces of tile, or upside-down plastic bottle caps to create a space between the pot and saucer.

HUMIDITY: Your plants have become accustomed to the high humidity of summer, and will especially appreciate humidity indoors once you start using your furnace. Many tropical plants will benefit from a humidifier or vaporizer near them, which will help to counteract the damaging effects of dry air and discourage spider mites. Keep your plants away from heat ducts.

FERTILIZER: Most plants will need only one application of slow release fertilizer for the winter or ½ strength liquid fertilizer, once per month. Remember that citrus and gardenias prefer an acidic fertilizer such as Miracid or any fertilizer approved for azaleas and rhododendrons.

LIGHT: Provide your plants with *plenty of light*. This is especially necessary for plants that are sun-lovers like citrus. Get them as close to a large window as possible. You might also consider providing supplemental lighting in the form of **LED Grow Light Bulbs** (do not use incandescent bulbs or “plant light” bulbs, which are nothing more than incandescent bulbs and will not benefit your plants).

LED Grow Light bulbs can be purchased at most box stores and online. You do not have to purchase special light fixtures. For example GE and Feit Electric offer grow bulbs to fit most of your existing table, floor, and ceiling lamps.

When combined with natural sunlight, they will give your plants the light spectrum that they require to help them make it through the winter indoors. 10 hours of supplemental light/day is helpful.

Plants that are not sun-lovers can be positioned in an east window or near a window with a sheer curtain.