

# Storage of Fuchsias, Geraniums, Tuberous Begonias, etc.

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## Fuchsias

Fuchsias are in some cases quite hardy and will winter-over outside if in a protected spot or given a little shelter. Others should be dug just ahead of frost and severely pruned back so as not to take up undue room. They can then be wintered in a cool place such as a garage, porch, greenhouse, or cold frame in slightly moist sawdust, peat moss, or straw.

## Storage of old plants—(Several methods)

- A. Store outside in dry sawdust in a sheltered box or frame. Prune plants back to about two or three leaf buds of last seasons' growth. Let the plant go as dormant as possible before storing, but don't let it freeze. Uncover in late March or early April before the plants start to put out shoots and keep as a house plant until safe to set in the yard. If the plant has already begun to put out new shoots, pinch them off and force new ones to come out. Sometimes it is difficult to get buds to start from old wood. If plants have been growing in the garden, roots should be examined for strawberry root weevil.
- B. Dig a trench 12 to 18 inches deep in a well-drained area. Place 4 inches of sawdust in the bottom; prune the plants as described in A; lay the plants in the sawdust, cover with sawdust, and place soil on the top. Plants must be as dormant as possible when placed in the trench.
- C. Carry plants over in the basement or garage but keep slowly growing. These plants usually are difficult to get started in the spring and may not bloom as profusely as you would like.
- D. If the house has a window well, remove window and place on top of the well and plants will keep in the well very satisfactorily. Plants must be

kept growing slowly. Water sparingly in this type of storage in order to allow for as long a dormancy period as possible.

- E. A good method is to root tip cuttings and pot in sand. These cuttings can then be grown as house plants, but keep them well pruned. To make cuttings usually the tip  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 inch of the plant is best. Leave two leaves and the center leaf. Handle the same as other cuttings. Peat-moss or vermiculite can also be used for rooting cuttings, but it is not as satisfactory as sand. As soon as plants have rooted, pot them in  $2\frac{1}{2}$ - to 3-inch pots.

## Geraniums

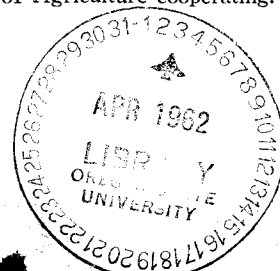
Geraniums usually have to be lifted in the fall before heavy frosts occur if they are to be saved. Cuttings can be and usually are made at this time the same as for fuchsias except that the cuttings should be 3 to 5 inches long. When making geranium cuttings use only the tip part of the plant. Plants which have received rough treatment in the summer usually have to be cut back severely and forced to make new tips, which make the best cuttings. These make better plants than old ones carried over. In carrying over old plants it is best to cut them back severely and plant in as small a pot as possible. They should be watered once and stored in a cool place with some light. A rot problem often occurs with geraniums and there is no known method of controlling it. In order to reduce the rot, plants should be kept growing very slowly during the winter.

## Tuberous Begonias

Lift mature plants carefully just prior to fall frosts. Cut back most of the top but leave the ball of roots and soil intact.



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Place in a dry, cool storage (basement or garage) and allow tubers to cure for 2 or 3 weeks.

Shake off soil and remove balance of stalks and roots. Any stalk left will induce rotting.

Keep tubers by placing on screened trays or packing in dry peat, sand, vermiculite, or sawdust. A dry, cool storage is best.

Start plants in the spring by placing them on damp peat moss in slight pockets and giving them a warm temperature. When started they can be planted in small pots or in an outside bed if danger of frost is past. The soil should contain an abundance of organic matter and should be treated with a soil insecticide to prevent insect damage.

### **Cannas**

Dig cannas carefully, leaving as much soil on the tubers as possible. Store them in a cellar or room where temperatures remain cool and above freezing.

### **Gladioli**

Lift gladioli about the middle of October or when the tops start to die. Cut the tops back to 1 or 2 inches and corms will dry quickly with plenty of air circulation. When dry, remove the old corms, tops, and cormlets, and store the new corms in trays at 45° to 50° F. Usually a DDT dust is used to control thrips as soon as

the corms are dry. Corms, after curing and ready for storage, can be placed in dry vermiculite and stored in the garage. Temperatures higher than 45 degrees will normally cause corms to sprout before planting time in the spring. Vermiculite is very good insulation against freezing.

### **Dahlias**

Lift dahlias carefully after the first frost or heavy rains and cut back to 4 or 5 inches. If frost has not occurred, cut the stock off just above the ground and let cure for several days before digging. Store in approximately 50° temperature. Some store the tubers in the clump by placing them in sand, peat, vermiculite, or dry sawdust. They can be kept for several months stacked dry in a bushel basket and covered with burlap. Watch for indications of shriveling and add moisture if necessary. Commercial growers like to cut tubers soon after digging, treat the cut end with fungicide, and store in dry sawdust or vermiculite. Dahlias are much more easily divided at approximately 2 weeks after digging than in the spring. The difficulty with dividing at this time is in seeing the buds or eyes and in storing for the rest of the winter. Sometimes rot enters where the cut is made. If this method is followed, tubers should be examined frequently during the winter to see that rot is not present.