



November 2020 Horticulture Report

Bringing Your Non-Edible Plants Indoors for the Winter

November is normally a quiet time for gardeners. But is it? This year with the unusually warm weather, I, for one, was still bringing in my deck plants along with others which were still growing in the garden in early November. There are a few things to consider when bringing your summer plants into the house to live in quiet warmth and reduced sunlight during the Winter.

The first step is to trim off any dead or brown leaves on the plants. No sense treating any leaves and stems that are not coming in with the plant. My geraniums are given a haircut, a rather severe one I might add. And during the Winter months most of the new growth is pinched back rather severely about every two weeks. Try not to let them get leggy which reaching for the light will do to them. Unless you live in a greenhouse there will be less light for them indoors.

It is most important to ensure no pests or diseases are brought in with your plants. If your plants are in containers and have a saucer wash both the outside of the container and saucer with soapy water containing a drop of bleach. This will kill any insect eggs or fungus spores. Then completely rinse and dry off both the container and saucer to remove any residual bleach.

Look at the plant's foliage carefully for any webs, visible signs of insects or spider mites. Completely remove all of these problems by washing the entire plant with warm soapy water (NO bleach please). Carefully and completely wash the underside of the leaves. Let the plants sit for a while, about a half hour, and then rinse off the soap residue with a spray bottle filled with water.

The next step is to treat the soil with a systemic insecticide to ensure there are no insect critters living in the soil. Water this insecticide onto the soil. It will kill aphids, whiteflies, leaf miners, mealy bugs, scale, and mites. This is a very important step to ensure you do not spread any of these problems to other houseplants that have not lived outside for the Summer months.

Find a window with sufficient light for the plants to reside through the Winter and until you can move them outside again in the Spring. Because there is less plant growth indoors during the winter, it is not necessary to feed and water the plants with the same regularity as you do when they reside outside during the Summer.

Do not place your plants near an outside door that gets a lot of use during the winter. Likewise keep them away from an overly drafty window, or place towels along the bottom of the window to cover any draft. Conversely, the plants should not be placed near a radiator, heat vent, or other heat source.

Taking these six steps should help ensure that the same plants can beautify both your outdoor and indoor spaces all year round and for years to come.