

Overwintering Tropicals

Hibiscus & Mandevilla

If you want to grow your hibiscus & mandevilla again the next season, you will need to bring them indoors before the night temps drop much below 40° F. They will need a bright or sunny area, or under fluorescent lights if you want them to “grow”. The optimum temperatures indoors seem to be between 50 and 70. The cooler end of that temperature range will produce far fewer insect problems later in the winter.

Transporting: Grow your tropicals in pots if you want to overwinter them for next year. They can be kept in relatively small pots for years (10-14" in diameter is fine).

Treat & Prune: Before you bring them inside, spray with an insecticidal soap or Neem Oil, then cut back your plant(s) quite a bit, to within 4-5" of the main stems.

- This does a few things: it will help eliminate the bugs and insects that hide in the plants BEFORE they get inside. They like to hang out on the tips of the branches, in the newest growth.
- You also give the plant less to have to worry about-not as much growth to feed.

Rest from Fertilizing: If you want the best chance of having healthy, vigorous plants with flowers next summer, your plants need to rest indoors during the shorter days from October till April.

- DO NOT push them to keep blooming indoors and leave them full of old foliage as this will exhaust the plant, create spindly growth and invite bugs. As with any houseplant, do not fertilize at all during the winter (fertilizer says “grow”).
- our plants will rest and may not produce new leaves until late February or March. This is normal too. In the early part of April we will bring it outside and begin to fertilize once we have some new growth. At that time we will re-pot if necessary.

Water: Once inside, the leaves will probably turn yellow and fall off - this is normal. They will regrow when they are ready. In the meantime, water very sparingly! It is best to let the soil become almost bone dry before soaking it again. Do not let any water sit under the plants in saucers, etc.

Light: If you want to try to preserve the leaves that are on it, give it 3 or so hours of sun or direct light (fluorescent) otherwise, place in a cool dark room like the basement and only water when it is very dry. This will put them into a semi-dormancy (they don't go dormant).

Realize that many times, hibiscus never bloom well again after the 1st winter inside. There is not much you can do about this. But the little effort here can save you \$20-\$40 next year.

Good Earth Garden Market

11650 Falls Road | Potomac, MD 20854 | 301.765.0224

www.gegardenmarket.com

