

# URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

## How to overwinter potted plants:

Some gardeners, especially those with not a whole lot of land, may put perennials in pots to decorate their patio or lawn with. If an annual is in a pot, the flowers will die at the end of the season and can be replaced with new annuals the following year. Perennials, however, will survive the winter, but there are certain steps gardeners need to take if they are planning on overwintering their potted plants.

### Potting problems in the winter:

In the winter, plants in pots have roots that are much more susceptible to damage from the cold than their counterparts that are planted in the ground.

Another problem apart from the plants is oftentimes, pots will shatter if it gets too cold. This can kill your plant, and it also makes a mess you have to clean up. When choosing pots to keep outdoors, choose those that are glazed over terra cotta pots because terra cotta pots are more likely to shatter, though there are some specific types of clay that may withstand freezing temperatures.

### Solutions:

If you plan to keep your potted plants outdoors all winter long, choose plants that are hardy to a zone that is two zones colder than yours. For example, if you live in Zone 6, choose plants hardy to Zone 4 to ensure their survival outdoors. Also, plant the plant in a larger pot than it needs so you can add more soil around its roots. This will act as insulation. Also, wrap bubble wrap around the outside of the pot to provide another layer of protection.



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### How to prepare plants:

Most times, plants prepare themselves for the winter time. However, to make sure you're taking the right steps to help prepare your plants for winter, stop fertilizing them by mid-summer so they don't continue to put out new, fragile growth that is more easily damaged by harsh winter temperatures than established growth. If you have more tender perennials, move them indoors to keep at a bright window location before the first frost hits. For hardier perennials, leave them outdoors because they require a chill period to produce flowers and fruits for the next season. If your temperatures fall below freezing, move these pots to an unheated garage or basement and reduce your watering to about once a month or less, but don't let the soil become completely dry. Instead of moving them indoors, you can even dig a hole in the ground to place the pot in so that it acts as natural ground insulation during the winter. You can also



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place plants in a more sheltered location, such as against an outdoor wall or in a corner to help protect it from the harsh elements.



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