

Geraniums

As a Winter Flowering Plant

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Geraniums are one of our many dual purpose plants. They provide color and interest in our summer gardens and outdoor pots and can be grown as an indoor flowering plant during the winter. Many people bring the plants indoors and give them a minimal amount of water and sunlight. Allocating them to some corner in the basement. Some how they recover after being placed back outdoors. Geraniums can also be grown as indoor flowering plants in the winter. Whatever path you choose, Geraniums can last for many years.

For many years I moved my plants indoors for the winter and had a front porch window full of 2 dozen or more 6" potted plants. During January through April they provided me with an abundance of color. The following is the method that worked for me.

1. The outdoor plants need to be cut back over 75%. This seems harsh, but they will branch back and fully recover.
2. I like to leave them outdoors as long as possible.
3. They should be knocked out of their pots and repotted in a size pot that will best fit your growing environment.
4. They need a bright window. The more light, the more flowers.
5. The Geraniums started to bloom for me around January. By this time they have recovered from the cutting back and there will be more sunlight as compared to November and December.
6. Even in the brightest window, the plants will stretch and need to be pruned back. I would cut back about 1/3 of the branches every week to every other week. This left many branches with flowers and kept the plants compact.
7. These plants will require constant maintenance. They will produce tons of flowers and these will need to be deadheaded.
8. At the end of April the plants will need another cutting back. This time not as hard as the first but still around 50%. This will give you nice compact plants by the end of May to put back outside.
9. If you over wintered a 6" potted plant, it will easily fill out an 8-10 inch pot or more by the end of the summer.
10. Cuttings can be taken from any of the stems during the months when the plants are being cut back. Cuttings taken off of fall plants are harder to root because the plants get "fallized"

"Lots of work but well worth the effort"

