

Ag Column
Chris Ramsey
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Time to Move Houseplants Indoors

Our UT Extension Master Gardener Volunteers respond to questions from the public about home gardening topics. The following question was recently presented to our group. I thought this was some great information to pass along to you.

Q: When is the best time to bring in all my indoor houseplants that I've kept outside all summer long?

A: If most of your houseplants are tropical, such as begonias or hibiscus, they should be brought in when the outside temperature drops below 55 degrees F. Some may survive temperatures into the 40s. A frost or a temperature dip into the low 30s will typically kill your houseplants. The first frost usually arrives in our area in mid- to late-October, so watch for the frost warnings in the weather forecast.

Like we always say, be prepared. Before you bring in your plants, check for bugs and slugs that may have made a home in your containers. To test for insects, soak your container plants in warm water for 15 minutes. If insects are present, they will rise to the top and you can spray them with the appropriate insecticide. Then you should repot your plant with good soil.

Set your sun loving plants in a south facing window and the others in an east or west facing window. Set them in a shallow dish on a layer of fine gravel and keep the gravel moist throughout the winter. This should provide enough moisture for your plant to survive the winter. Without the gravel, your plant's roots could sit in water and start rotting.

More information can be found on these websites:

<https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/special/containers/when-to-bring-plants-indoors.htm> and
<https://gardenerstpath.com/how-to/indoor-gardening/houseplant-care-primer/>

If you want to provide artificial light for your plants, see this University of Missouri website for some good information and how-to guides:

<https://extensiondata.missouri.edu/pub/pdf/agguides/hort/g06515.pdf>

Indoor plants can help clean up your indoor air and provide some humidity to your home this winter.

This website lists the 50 best plants to help purify the air in your home:

<https://www.ourhouseplants.com/guides/50-plants-that-clean-the-air>.

The UT Extension Master Gardener Volunteers work in partnership with the local Extension office in their counties to expand educational outreach, providing home gardeners with researched-based information

If you have any questions about this article, please call me at the UT-TSU Extension Office at 423-574-1919.