
UNH Cooperative Extension Info Line Question of the Week

Potted Geraniums



Question. The potted geraniums I brought in for the winter are dropping their leaves. What's going on?

Answer. It's not uncommon for geraniums to lose their leaves when moved indoors, especially if they've been moved overnight from a sunny garden to a windowsill. Next year try to move your plant indoors gradually. First move it to a shady spot for a few days to help it acclimate to the lower light levels found in your house. Sudden changes in light often cause up to 50% of the leaves to dry up and fall off. Leaving geraniums outdoors after night temperatures drop to 50

degrees F can also cause leaf drop, but most often the cause is a sudden change in light levels.

Once indoors, put your geranium in a south or west window. Plants that don't bloom often aren't getting enough light. Cut back on watering during the winter, but don't allow the roots to dry out completely. Water until you see liquid seeping out the drainage holes, and don't water again until the top 1 inch of soil is dry. You can stop fertilizing for the winter and begin again in March as spring approaches. If you can keep daytime temperatures warm (between 65 and 75 degrees F) and night time temperatures cool (55-60 degrees F), you should get plenty of blooms all winter. Deadheading spent flowers will also help promote blooms. If your geraniums begin to look leggy you can pinch off the growing tips to stimulate branching or wait until late March and take cuttings for new plants.

Got questions? UNH Cooperative Extension Education Center's Info Line offers practical help finding answers for your lawn and garden questions. Call toll free at 1-877-398-4769, M-F, 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., or e-mail us at answers@unh.edu