



Fact Sheet No. 5

How to treat your plants during the winter

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Here are some handy tips from Rex Dibley on how to overwinter your houseplants.

Streptocarpus

At this time of the year most varieties of Streptocarpus (except the Crystal series) will gradually stop flowering. During the winter if the plants are in the house they can be placed on a south facing windowsill to receive as much light as possible (remove from the sill at night if it gets too cold next to the windows). Normal room temperatures will be fine. You can stop feeding the plants from now until February and just water sparingly when necessary.

The Crystal series of Streptocarpus should continue flowering provided they are in a really light position and kept at room temperature. Continue feeding these at half strength if using a liquid feed or if using our Streptocarpus food tablets, use half a tablet each month.

If the plants are in a greenhouse or conservatory the minimum temperature should be 5C. It is essential they are kept on the dry side.

Come next March gradually up the water and start feeding again or pot on into a slightly larger pot.

Saintpaulias

These must be kept at a minimum temperature of 15C. Otherwise treat in a similar way to the Crystal Streptocarpus.

Rhizomatous plants such as Achimenes, Kohlerias & Smithiantha

These will die down at this time of the year. As they do so, gradually stop watering. You will be left with a number of rhizomes in the compost. These can be left in the pot or you can tease them out of the compost and store them in a closed container mixed with some vermiculite in a frost free place.

About March time plant several rhizomes in a pot and keep at a temperature of at least 10C. In a few weeks young shoots will start appearing.

Coleus

To keep these growing through the winter they need a bright position and a temperature of 15C. Rather than keep big plants it may be easier to start cuttings off in a propagator ready to get growing again next spring.

Foliage Begonias

They require a minimum temperature of 10C and a bright position. Be careful not to over water. If it is too cold, Rex Begonias will lose their leaves but the rhizome should resprout in the spring.