



Grandora Aquatics

PO Box 46
Grandora SK S0K 1V0

306.933.4225 – 306.227.7926
nigelh@grandora-aquatics.com

OVERWINTERING YOUR PLANTS

Hardy plants are perennials and can be kept for many years. Some varieties may require additional protection due to differences in your zone and actual microclimate of your pond. Plant Hardiness Zones in Saskatchewan range from 1 in the north of the province to 3b in the south.

For more information on Hardiness Zones visit the agriculture and Agri-Food Canada website at:

<http://sis.agr.gc.ca/cansis/nsdb/climate/hardiness/intro.html>



Hardy Water Lilies and Lotus

Hardy water lilies and lotus will overwinter if their roots do not freeze solid. Foliage will die back mid to late fall but the roots will remain alive. Steps to overwinter lilies and lotus should be taken at this time. **DO NOT COVER** the pond or bring plants inside until late fall when dormancy has begun.



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There are two commonly used methods to overwinter hardy water lilies:

1. In pond storage.

Remove any dead leaves on lilies, but not on the lotus, and move the plant containers to the deepest area of the pond and lower them to the bottom of the pond. It is recommended that your pond be 1 1/2 to 3 feet deep in the deepest area if this method is chosen. Colder zones may need to increase this depth or use increased protection methods such as covering the pond with boards or framed plastic to provide extra insulation. However, it is important not to make the pond cover airtight. Return plant containers to their original positions in the spring. If you have any fish remaining in your pond it is important to keep an open area of water in the ice so that there can continue to be a gas exchange over the winter.

2. Indoor storage.

Use this method if your pond is shallow and will likely freeze solid. Remove the old leaves from the lily and bring the planted container indoors and store in a cool area, around 5 degrees C., for the winter. Keep containers moist and dark at all times. More lilies are lost from drying out than freezing. Return plant containers to their original positions in the pond after the ice has melted in the spring.

Hardy Shallow Water Plants

Some hardy shallow water plants can tolerate being frozen solid while others need their roots or tubers to remain in the water. Irises, Rushes (except Pickerel Rush), Sweet Flag, Cattails, Horsetail, Marsh Marigold Bulrush, Houltuynia. Golden Creeping Jenny and Buttercup, Watercress and Water Forget-Me-Not may be left in shallow water where they will likely freeze. Most other varieties should be moved to deep water or bought indoors to cold storage – see method 2 above. Return all plants to the growing shelves as soon as the ice has melted in the spring.

Note: Do not remove the dead leaf stocks from emergent plants such as cattails and rushes until spring. This will allow the root systems to “breathe” during the winter.

Tropical Plants

Although tropical plants may be grown in our climate during the summer, they are considered annuals unless a heated greenhouse or similar facility is available.



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Tropical Water Lilies

When bought indoors, tropical water lilies and plants continue to grow during the winter months and must receive sunlight and heat. Growth slows considerable in December and January when there is very little sunlight and the leaves will become yellow and small. Most people treat tropical water lilies as annuals due to the considerable effort required for their continual growth.

If you wish to try and overwinter your tropical water lily you can try the following method. Before the first heavy frost in your area, bring the tropical water lily indoors to a heated greenhouse or sunroom. Place the container in a tank, fertilize sparingly and ensure that the water temperature does not fall below 20 degrees C. This will prevent the lily from going into a dormant state even though growth slows considerably. The following spring when the pond water temperature has warmed to a consistent 20 degree C temperature, in early June, place the lily back in your pond.

Tropical Shallow Water Plants

Like tropical water lilies, tropical shallow water plants must continue to grow during the winter months. Growth will be reduced considerably as daylight hours diminish. Umbrella Palm, Dwarf Papyrus, Little Giant Papyrus and White Arum lilies will survive the winter indoors and make excellent houseplants. Other varieties are best treated as annuals.

If you wish to try overwintering your tropical shallow water plants not listed above you can try the following method. Remove the tropical plants from the pond before the first severe frost and bring indoors to a heated greenhouse or sunroom. Plants must remain in water and be kept at a temperature of approximately 18 degrees C. Remove old growth if it yellows. Return to the pond in the spring when there is no risk of frost and the ice on the pond has melted.

Note: Small amounts of fertilizer may be required to encourage the plants to keep growing during the winter.

Many people treat Tropical Shallow Water Plants as annuals due to the cost and effort to overwinter. Simple compost plants in the fall and restock the pond the following spring. Water gardeners in Canada frequently use the previous overwintering methods for plants. These suggestions can be used alone or in any combination to best suit your own situation. There is no guarantee that your plants will survive the winter.