



# Hi - Lights

INDOOR GARDENING SOCIETY

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**NOTE: Special Meeting and Day: SUNDAY, October 20, 2013  
1:00 PM Smith Auditorium, Cleveland Botanical Gardens**



Fall fell, with a thud. Suddenly, it seems to be dark by 7:30 PM. The Cleveland Indians enjoyed one day of October ball - a first in 6 years. The end of baseball has always been the end of summer for me. As I am writing (10/8/2013, 5 AM EST), my plants remain on the balcony, overlooking Cleveland and Lake Erie. My hopes are for warm weather for at least another week! I harvested some herbs for dinner last night, and am still trying to coax roots from some very interesting coleus I *found* (suffice it to say, the plants were in need of a 'haircut'). It's 50 degrees here on the lake, brisk and a beautiful morning sunrise sets a glow behind Terminal Tower.

At our upcoming meeting, we will host the Midwest Cactus and Succulent Society. We hope to learn and grow from each other, and expand our programming efforts for some diversity of topics. Please make an effort to attend this interesting gathering!

If anyone is interested in creative baking for this event, see the URL below - these cupcakes are adorable and fitting for our guests!

<http://alanajonesmann.com/2013/04/diy-house-plant-cupcakes/>



Enjoy the colors of this season, they won't last too long and may even get covered by snow!

*-Chris Block, Editor*

## President's Message, October, 2013

It must be fall, because pumpkins are popping up all over the place. Petunias have been replaced with mums and apples have replaced peaches. Fall means the reverse of outdoor chores - taking in hoses, bringing in garden ornaments, and especially, bringing in houseplants that have been summering outside. Don't forget to debug, you never know who has made their home in your pots.

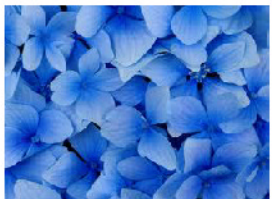
I hope those who attended our last meeting had a good time betting at the Chinese Auction. There were 36 plants to choose from, and everyone won at least one plant. There was a nice selection. It was an indication of what will show up at our Fall Plant Sale next year, so start thinking about it now.

Our October meeting will be a new venture for us. Since we have members who belong to both clubs, I know they will be there. It's the remaining members who I hope will make an effort to attend this joint venture with the Midwest Cactus and Succulent Society. The program is pertinent to both clubs, since many of us have cacti and succulents. I promised that we would help in providing refreshments for the meeting, so if you desire, bring a sweet or savory to munch on. As you know, Bill Hendricks is an expert on cacti and succulents, so we will learn a new trick or two. Save Oct. 20 for this meeting. See you all there!

-Pat Ballo, President

## Some Preplanning for Next Year - Bob Olekson

Hydrangeas have always been one of my very favorite flowers because I first learned of the various flowers when I was 6 years old and my grandmother had a lovely bush on the east side of her house underneath the water faucet. I was fascinated with the huge clusters of blooms in colors of blue, purple and pink and felt royalty was around.



My grandmother gave me a start of one but unfortunately it never grew. I remember beautiful potted plants at Easter time and it is one of my favorite associations. I read also that the Easter Hydrangeas may not be winter hardy. But I feel this may be untrue since my grandmother grew them with such ease. Perhaps she had them in a moist sheltered location. I have noticed also they are sometimes only marginally hardy. A winter will kill them to the ground. When I was in Ocean City with my Aunt and Uncle, one summer, hydrangeas grew beautifully and are hardier there. I never tried to grow another after the one my grandmother gave me died. Perhaps I would have more luck with them as a houseplant. They like moisture and humus-like soil. If the soil is acidic the flowers are blue. If alkaline, the flowers bloom pink. *(continued)*

I noticed in Ohio the flowers are usually pink but in Ocean City they were largely blue. It seems an easy plant to care for as long as its kept moist, given sun and in a cool place for the winter. The plants do take up much room. Apparently cuttings will root easily in the spring. Someday I should experiment more with these (perhaps some beat up plant reduced after Easter will do. Then maybe I can recreate my childhood once again. Lots of beautiful varieties are now in catalogs and at Garden Centers. It is a flower whose time has come.



### Csilla's Notes:

I also have loved hydrangeas since my childhood. They seem so big and in your face and not shy at all. But their changing colors fascinate me (sort of like the ubiquitous science project where you immerse a celery stick in a glass of red dyed water and see it turn red. It seems to communicate us its needs.

One of the greatest needs of a Hydrangea (as the name implies) is frequent watering. In summer that means very deep and frequent soakings. Bob's Grandmother's idea of planting it under a water outlet sounds appropriate. My problem is the color. I can't seem to make up my mind whether I want pink or blue. So one year I did nothing with either lime or acid and I had both colors. Maybe that why there is also a choice of white for undecided people like me.



I have tried propagating the Lace Cap by laying it on soil and anchoring it with a rock but it never took so perhaps I'll follow Bob's advice next spring and just put vegetative cuttings into water to root. An added reward is the flowers in fall, which cut and dry easily and make great additions to winter bouquets.

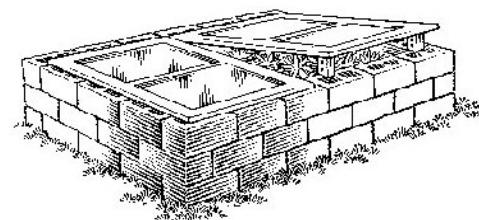
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### How to Build and Use a Cold Frame

**Kathleen Marshall** -Published electronically, Davesgarden.com, September 11, 2013

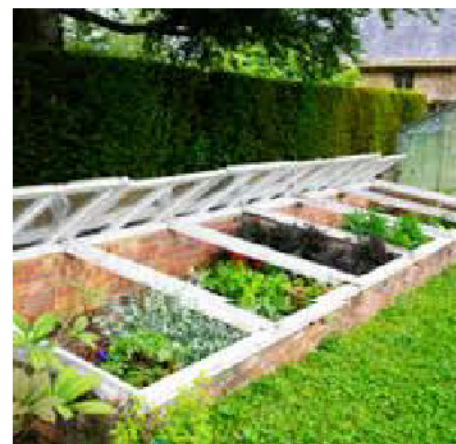
First you'll need to choose the correct location for your cold frame. As is the case with most gardens, you want it to have full sun. Have it face south as much as possible. Choose an area that has good drainage and that gets some protection from icy winds. Often, you can find free windows from old houses on your local free classified sites, such as Craigslist. These are great, but be careful about the possibility of lead-based paint in very old windows. In extremely snowy climates, glass may break when snow piles on top, so keep that in mind as well. Other covering options *(continued)*

include plexiglass, greenhouse plastic, or fiberglass. Anything that will allow light to get through to the plants will do the job, so use whatever you can get easily and cheaply.



### **Building the frame of your cold frame**

You also have options for your frame. Some people like to use old bales of straw or hay. Arrange them into a square or rectangle that will accommodate your cover. Cinder blocks, with the holes going vertically, or bricks can also be used. Many people have old bricks or cinder blocks laying around. If you don't have any, ask around or check on Craigslist or someplace similar. This could be another component to your cold frame that could be free. Wood can also be used for your frame. Just avoid pressure treated wood so you don't end up with chemicals like arsenic in your garden plants. Use brackets or screws to hold the frame together. Then, you can even add hinges to the top for your cover if you like.



### **Extra building tips**

When building your frame, try to make it so it slightly slopes toward the south. Make the back of your frame 4 to 6 in. higher than the front for the ideal angle. It needs to be angled enough for rain and snow to run off, as well as to allow the most possible light inside. Your cover will need to be propped open on days around 40 degrees or above. You can use a stick or place a brick under the lid to hold it open. Just don't forget to close it in afternoon so your plants don't freeze at night.

Very cold climates can add extra insulation by digging a hole about 8 inches below the soil level. Line the bottom with gravel and place your cold frame over it. Plants will be warmer when they are deeper. You can also use more straw, leaves, blankets, or old newspapers around the cold frame if you think you will need extra insulation.

### **Using your cold frame**

Now that your cold frame is ready, you can plant lettuce, kale, spinach or other cool-weather vegetables in it. This will allow you to harvest fresh vegetables well into the winter. If you live in cold climate, you can use your cold frame to grow vegetables that need hotter climates to grow well in the summer, such as tomatoes or peppers? Another use for a cold frame is to use it to protect plants that are dormant for the winter. Often these plants are kept in a garage or other cool place, but if you don't have a suitable location, the cold frame is perfect. You can also give your garden a jump start by using a cold frame. If you start seeds indoors, you can start them up to 6 weeks. *(continued)*

earlier and then transplant the seedling to the cold frame. Once the weather is warm enough to put them in the garden, they will be big healthy plants ready for their permanent home. If you have several cold frames in your garden, you can just remove the cold frames when the weather is warm enough and you'll have your garden already planted.

If you prefer, you can seed your plants directly into the cold frame instead of starting them indoors. This won't give you as much of a jump start, but even getting your garden started 2 or 3 weeks early will improve your yields.

With so many uses and the simplicity of building, a cold frame is a small investment that will give you big returns. Try one this year and you will wonder why you haven't tried it sooner.

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### **Storing Tender Bulbs for Winter Overwintering Tender Bulbs, Corms, Rhizomes and Tubers**

Marie Iannotti, electronically published at about.com Guide <http://gardening.about.com/>

While gardeners in zones 8 and above can grow tender bulbs, corms, rhizomes, and tubers year round, northern gardeners will need to dig and store these plants to overwinter them. There are no absolute rules for overwintering the tender plants but in general:

1. Keep them dry and above freezing temperatures.
2. Don't store in air tight containers that could cause moisture build up and rot or fungus.
3. Check regularly for desiccation and mold.
4. Remember to label by type and color.

### **Below are specifics for some commonly grown tender bulbs, corms, rhizomes and tubers:**

**Alocasia** (Elephant's Ear): Easiest to simply treat as potted houseplants. Feed lightly throughout winter and water often. If ground grown, lift and pot before frost. Alocasia tubers can also be cleaned and stored in peat moss, in a cool, dry spot. Plants tend to get larger as the tubers age. Repot in early spring.

**Anemone coronari** (Windflower): Follow guidelines given for storing dahlias. Bulbs are often sold in the fall, but they are not hardy in Zones 5 and lower.

**Begonias, Tuberous:** Allow a frost to kill the tops, but do not allow the tubers to freeze. Lift and let tubers dry for one week, with about 5 inches of the foliage still in tact. Remove excess soil and foliage and store in peat moss or sawdust at 50 degrees F. Repot in early spring and keep warm, 68 - 75 degrees F. Move to a sunny spot when shoots appear. Keep evenly moist, but not wet. Plant outside after all danger of frost.

**Caladium:** Lift plants before frost and allow them to dry in a warm spot. Cut back the foliage after it dies. Caladium bulbs don't like to be stored in cold temperatures. Keep at 50 - 60 degrees F. Pack loosely in peat moss. Repot up in early Spring, about 2 inches deep, knobby side up. Keep the soil moist and warm - 75 - 80 degrees F. Move outdoors after all danger of frost.

**Canna:** Allow frost to kill the tops, but do not allow the rhizomes to freeze. Carefully lift the plants and cut off the dead tops. Hose off excess soil and allow to dry. Rhizomes can be wrapped in newspaper and stored in paper bags or cardboard boxes, at 45 to 50 degrees F. easy to overwinter. Cannas can be divided by hand. Break apart, insuring there are at least 3 eyes per division. Repot in early spring or plant directly in the garden once the temperatures remain above 70 degrees F. Keep well watered.

**Colocasia esculenta:** They can be brought indoors as a houseplant or dug and overwintered as a tuber. Store the dried tubers in peat moss. Check the tubers monthly and cut away any soft spots that may develop. Allow the remaining healthy portion to dry before restoring in peat. Repot about 8 weeks before the last expected spring frost. If dividing, be sure each tuber piece has a corm. Allow the tubers to dry a few days before replanting them. *(continued)*

**Crocsmia:** Follow the guidelines given for storing gladiolas.

**Dahlias:** Can be over-wintered in the ground with sufficient mulch, but it is risky. To store them, they must be dug before a hard freeze, but their tops may be allowed to die back from a light frost. It's easiest to see the dahlia eyes, for division purposes, within a week after the tops are cut or killed back. These tubers don't like to get completely dried out. Overwinter in peat moss and check monthly for dehydration. Mist lightly, if necessary. Tubers are usually direct planted in the garden, once temperatures warm.

**Freesia** Follow the guidelines given for storing gladiolas.

**Gladiola:** Lift the plants in the fall either when the plants yellow or after the first frost. Cut the stems back to 1 inch and allow the corms to dry. Remove the old, shriveled portion, keeping only the new plump corms. These store easily in peat moss or sand. Plant directly in the ground beginning when the ground warms. Stagger plantings to extend the season of bloom.

**Glory Lily:** Store in peat moss. Check the tubers monthly cut away any soft spots that may develop. Allow the remaining healthy portion to dry before restoring in peat. In general, use the same guidelines as dahlias. You can repot them after only 2 months of storage or hold until early spring.



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