

If the surface of the pond does freeze solid, do not attempt to break a hole in the ice. (The shock of the blows could kill the fish.) Instead, place a pot of boiling water on the surface until it melts a hole in the ice. Tadpoles, frogs and snails will bury themselves in the soil of plant pots or in mud at the bottom of the pond. For preformed ponds that are at least 18" deep, a dishpan of sand placed in the bottom of the pond will provide a bed for these animals.

FLOATERS

Water Hyacinths and Water Lettuce are extremely difficult to overwinter and should be treated as annuals and replaced each year. Remove them as soon as frost has hit them; do not let them decompose in the pond.

PERENNIAL WATER LILIES

If your pond is at least 18" deep, it is safe to overwinter Perennial Water Lilies. They should be placed in the deepest part of your pond. As the foliage yellows at the end of the season, remove the old leaves so they do not decompose in the pond.

If the pond is less than 18" deep or is likely to freeze solid, the Lilies must be removed from the pond as they cannot freeze solid. They may be kept in a tub of water in a cool area. The temperature should be 40 to 55° (a cool basement is ideal). They will not be actively growing, but will maintain a few small leaves under the water surface.

An alternate way to store your Lilies is to remove them from the pond after the frost has killed the leaves. Remove the Lily from the pot and rinse all the soil off the tuber. Cut off any remaining leaves. The tuber should be kept in damp peat moss or sand. If the tuber is too wet, it will rot; if it is too dry, it will dehydrate. The media should be damp to the touch, but not dripping wet. Place the tubers and media in a plastic bag. Store the Lilies at 40 to 55°. Be sure to label the variety of your Lily so you know what you have in the spring. Repot the tubers in spring and place in the pond after the ice has melted.

PERENNIAL MARGINALS AND BOG PLANTS

If your pond is at least 18" deep, Perennial Marginals and potted Bog Plants can be overwintered in the pond. After frost has killed the foliage, set the plants in the deepest part of the pond. As a general rule, it is best to leave hardy water plants in the pond during the cold of winter. Hardy Bog plants that are planted in a bog garden should be left there all year. Do not cut back the stems of Cattails, Rushes, Reeds or other plants with hollow stems. (If these are cut back, the hollow stems will fill up with water and the crown of the plant is likely to rot). Remove foliage from other Perennial Marginals.

In the spring after the ice has melted, return the Marginals to their place on the shelves. Cut back Cattails, Rushes and Reeds to just above the water level in spring.

If your pond is less than 18" or is likely to freeze solid, bring the plants indoors and place in a tub of water following the instructions under PERENNIAL WATER LILIES. Cardinal Flower, Pickerel Rushes, Houttuynia and Lizard's Tail cannot be allowed to freeze solid.

ANNUAL WATER LILIES

These Lilies will not survive outdoors in the pond in our climate. They are native to more tropical regions and cannot withstand freezing temperatures. They must be kept actively growing or induced into dormancy. To keep the Lily actively growing, it must be placed in a tub of warm water with sufficient light and warmth. A minimum water temperature of 70° should be maintained. A greenhouse or sunroom is ideal for this. Fertilize sparingly to maintain plant vigor. Return the Lily to the pond when the water temperature reaches 65° (usually in early June). This method is difficult for most people because they do not have a location sunny enough or cannot maintain a sufficiently high water temperature.

An alternative method is to dry down the tuber similar to what is described under PERENNIAL WATER LILIES. These plants naturally have the ability to go dormant under drought conditions. Keep the Lilies in the pond until after a killing frost. The cold water will induce the formation of the tuber. Examine the area just below the crown of the plant for a small, black, grape-size tuber. (Older or pot-bound specimens may have produced additional tubers). Gently rinse all the soil from the tuber. Float the tubers in lukewarm water for a day. Viable tubers will sink and spoiled ones will float. Discard the spoiled ones. To insure complete dormancy, leave the viable tubers in water for up to two weeks, rinsing them daily; or air-dry them for a few days in a cool room. Either technique works well. Store the tubers in damp peat moss as described in PERENNIAL WATER LILIES. Around the first of May, check to see if sprouts have emerged. If they haven't, place the tubers in distilled water on a sunny windowsill to get them going. Pot them up in a heavy garden soil about 1/4" deep when roots are 1/2-1" long. Submerge the pots in 3" of water. Maintain a 65° minimum water temperature. After the leaves have emerged and the pond is at least 65°, move them back to the water garden.