

Home & Garden

EDITOR: FRANK JEFFRIES
PHONE: 502-582-4120

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Ask the Experts

Stuck-shut windows can be unsealed with special tools

Q: Once we started repairing the exterior of our home we found a continuing problem — we couldn't get windows to open properly after the trim on the frames had been painted.

I suspect that we need to spray the areas where the paint has sealed the windows but will have some of paint thinner or remover, but I'm not sure.

A: Many people wrongly assume that a chemical cleanser or even water, when applied to such troublesome areas, will loosen the paint and make it possible to open those windows.

But this method will make quite a mess and possibly damage the wood in the window frame. Water, if allowed to soak into the frames, can cause rot and mold problems.

Basic steps: Cover all of the paint on the window frame with a couple of coats of a paint that can be used to fix windows.

He suggests first trying the window squeegee — a thin, stainless-steel blade with a handle. The blade has serrated edges.

Jeff Thompson, a sales representative with Bostons Lumber Co., said he knows that same tool as the Dig-Zum window opener made by Dig-Zum.

Slide the blade into the crevice and then work around the window to remove the paint seal. The serrated edges and sawing action will break the bond created by the old paint.

Thompson said the Dig-Zum is about 1/2 inch long and is available at most hardware stores. Cost: \$8 to \$9.

The second tool he helps handle the problem is similar but lacks the serrated edges.

This thin, stainless-steel tool is used in combination with the zipper window opener and will usually free your windows. Charge: \$6.

At Dig-Zum, it called a "scraper and pry bar," but it is this simple to work into the crevice and create enough force to break the bond of dried paint.

This tool also can be used after you have painted window frames to ensure that this problem doesn't occur again.

You should also open and close your windows several times through the painting process and have them open, if possible, as your new paint is drying.

Send your questions and home decorating or repair to Ask the Experts, The Courier-Journal, 525 W. Broadway, P.O. Box 74901, Louisville, KY 40207-1151. Steve Clarke will research the questions with local business people who specialize in home repair.

Lord make us mindful of the little things that grow and blossom in these days to make the world beautiful for us.

W.E.R. Dobbie

'TIS THE Season

Now's the time: Take plants indoors before winter's cold

By GENE WELSH
Special to The Courier-Journal

This year was consistently too wet and too cool and too May. Preventing rot from planting in the garden. It's time to get in the garden for the fall.

Once I begin to search that fish, however, it's not hard to get. By mid-May my patio parking area and the oak between the two were filled and lined with potting plants.

On the patio a large 10-gallon or so container took shape with containers ranging in size from whiskey barrels to gallon-sized clay pots. Each was filled with soil and topped with a mix of both annuals and perennials.

In one half-gallon container I planted some perennials and annuals. In another, peppers took from gallon containers.

The brick walk and the paving area are lined with double rows of containers filled with perennials, annuals, grasses and trees. As the season shifted toward late summer I replaced some plants with fall flowers, such as mums.

Now my potting plants are at their peak. In the garden, they are waiting for the first frost. Oct. 10 is the official date to watch for the first frost. Sometimes it strikes earlier, sometimes later, but before that date temperatures at night will have begun dropping into the 30s or even high 20s.

These dropping night temperatures mother plant until it is ready to survive on its own. Leave about 4 inches of the upper portion of the stem above ground and upright.

If necessary, stakes to hold them in place, or put a rock or other heavy object on top of the stem. For faster rooting, cut a second just below a node on the stem portion to be buried. Once rooted, the new plant can be moved from the mother plant and potted for indoor growing.

HERBS CAN BE grown indoors, but will need a light source. Even a sunny window may not match the light intensity of a light-shaded indoor location. Indoor, sunny southern exposure would be ideal. Supplemental or artificial lighting may be needed. You can get special growing light bulbs, but you can achieve the same results by using a combination of warm white and cool white fluorescent lights.

Most herbs thrive in sterile soil and do not require extra fertilizer in the garden. However, if planted in one of the soil-less potting mediums, some fertilizer may be necessary.

A balanced, low-analysis fertilizer such as 3-3-3 or 9-9-9 is suitable. Water either in their mother's roots or in a separate container. Water when the top inch of soil feels dry and crumbly when touched. Apply enough water so that some drains from the bottom of the pot, thus washing away any excess salts.

Dr. Bruce Lerner is an assistant professor horticulturalist at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Ind.

are a warning that I'm about to lose most of my harvest. Since I water spring, summer and early fall leading and maintaining my flowers, I can't let them die in a single freeze-filled night.

If not allowed to set seed, some annuals make great indoor plants. Some herbs can be planted in the garden, while others make attractive indoor flowers. Your plants can be planted in the garden, or the pots can be sunk into the ground and mulched, then brought back out next spring. Tender types should be moved inside.

Before bringing any plant inside the home, however, there are a few things to watch for. First, if you have any plants that are in a warm, dry air during fall and winter, they will suffer if they are brought in as tender types, whether annuals and perennials. If you bring out a few from the home of the plants, they'll multiply dramatically, seemingly overnight.

The first step to prevent an indoor plant from dying is to take it to a warm water bath to prevent any rot. The first step to prevent an indoor plant from dying is to take it to a warm water bath to prevent any rot.

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that they not be used for cooking. In addition to working your plants, wash the exterior of all pots with a solution of one tablespoon of household bleach in a gallon of water. Also wash trays and the bottom of each container.

The next step finding a place with the right exposure to light inside the home. My house does not have a great amount of light inside or south. My eastern and northern exposures are already reserved for outside, so choices have to be made.

For an easy way to work by including one or two for coming inside and harvesting the remainder for the kitchen. Use the microwave to quickly dry the herbs for storage. Choose a day with low humidity. Dry leaves and small stems from the plant to fill one cup. Heat in a single layer for 10-15 minutes on paper towels. Microwave about three minutes or until leaves are just pulled from the stems and crumbly. Grate between hands and fingers. Store in dry sealed jars in a dark cabinet.

Cuttings can be taken from many of the annuals as well as most perennials. Select the cuttings from the last four inches of the stem. From the stems, trim the bottom of the stem to at least an inch or more. Place the cuttings in a plastic bag and place in a cool, dark place. Cover with a small, loose-textured material from a hardware store, and place in indirect light. In about six weeks the cuttings should form roots.

I place smaller individual containers in a warm water bath to prevent any rot. The first step to prevent an indoor plant from dying is to take it to a warm water bath to prevent any rot.

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ers in groups, often on trays of plastic film with water. The water should be just below, but not touching, the bottom of each pot.

The idea is to create humidity around the plants without risking rot.

Stake can also be gained from growing inside in my favorite plant stand. Each step can carry one or more pots, depending on their size. The top rung is a great position for seedling that trials, as the hole-down frame that normally holds a can of paint.

With careful selection, planning and watering, I have had success for just one more plant the water.

Here's a plant guide on what to take inside, what to leave outdoors

Herbs permitted to be taken inside

- Bay
- Chives
- Garlic chives
- Herb garden
- Herb ferns
- Herb plants
- Herb pots

Annually and tender perennials to be taken inside

- Bay
- Chives
- New Guinea impatiens
- Microcosma
- Coriaria

Herbs to be left inside

- Bay
- Chives
- New Guinea impatiens (Philadelphus)
- Lemon verbena
- Perilla
- Peppermint

Herbs that are safe outside

- Bay
- Chives
- Chives
- Chives
- Water celery
- Herb ferns
- Herb pots



PHOTO BY BRIAN BEHRENDSON, SPECIAL TO THE COURIER-JOURNAL

In Our Gardens

Fall's the time to propagate herbs to enjoy them throughout the winter

Herb gardeners can still bring home throughout the winter by propagating their garden plants now.

There are several approaches to overwintering plants. One easy method is to dig up a plant, or part of one, and pot it up. Plants such as thyme, lemon balm, mint, basil and sweet woodruff can be lifted and divided into sections to create new plants. Dividing is a handy technique for propagating because both roots and shoots are already formed. Leggy plants should be pruned back halfway.

MANY HERBS can be propagated by cuttings for rooting indoors. This method works especially well for plants that are large to move in their entirety.

Plants such as basil, oregano, lavender, rosemary, thyme and sage root easily from those top cuttings. Take the top of a node on the stem where the leaves attach, but be sure the bottom node is still attached to the stem. Remove the lower leaves and insert the cut end of the stem into moist earth such as soil mix, vermiculite or perlite.

Cover the container with plastic to help increase relative humidity. If the plastic fog on the inside, it is one thing. Place the pot in a warm, shaded location.

Some herbs, including rose, lemon balm and thyme propagate easily by layering. Bend a stem to the ground, remove leaves from that stem section, cover the section with soil, and water gently. The new plant will be rooted by the

mother plant until it is ready to survive on its own. Leave about 4 inches of the upper portion of the stem above ground and upright.

If necessary, stakes to hold them in place, or put a rock or other heavy object on top of the stem. For faster rooting, cut a second just below a node on the stem portion to be buried. Once rooted, the new plant can be moved from the mother plant and potted for indoor growing.

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Backyard Genius

Recycle your garden by harvesting seeds

Saving seeds from our favorite flowers and vegetables is not just fun, it is also a money saver — and adds a little more challenge to gardening.

We may not get the same colors from some of our friends, but it's the good stuff that we're after. Seeds from our favorite flowers and vegetables, such as tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, melons, squash, pumpkins, cucumbers and zucchini.

Vegetables that are fun to save include tomatoes, peppers and pumpkins.

I have found that plastic 16-millimeter film containers are just right for storing seeds after gathering them when they mature.

I spread the seeds out and let them dry for a few days. Then I put them in the film containers, label them and store them in the bottom of the refrigerator until planting time.

If you have a home or garden that will make life easier, send it to us. We'll pay \$25 for those you publish. Send your addresses, along with your daytime telephone numbers, to The Backyard Genius, c/o The Courier-Journal, 525 W. Broadway, P.O. Box 74901, Louisville, KY 40207-1151.



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