

For the home gardener . . .

IDEAL STORAGE For Bulbs and Tubers

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An old refrigerator can make an ideal storage cabinet for bulbs and tubers that are not winter hardy. Most bulbs, tubers, rhizomes and corms should be stored at about 40 degrees F — a temperature easily maintained in a refrigerator.

The refrigerator also makes a good place to store vegetables. BUT DO NOT store vegetables and bulbs together if the bulbs were treated with fungicides or insecticides.

Type of refrigerator

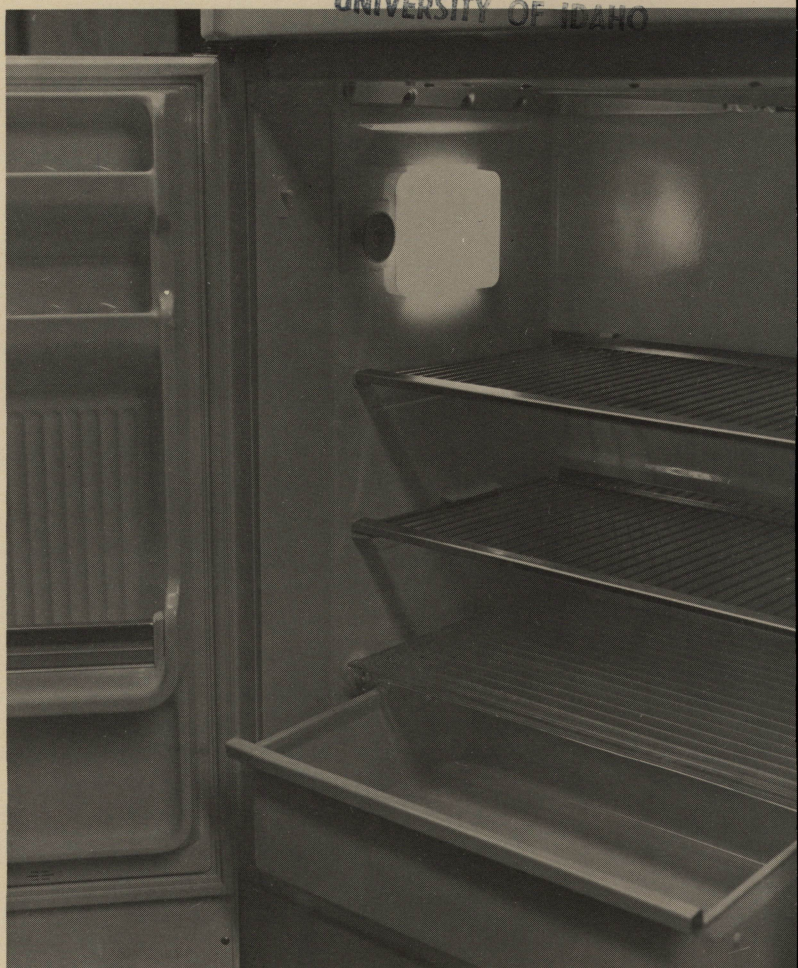
Use only sealed unit types that are in working order. A refrigerator that has a sealed unit can be disconnected for long periods of time. Units that are not sealed must be left connected to the power, or the refrigerant (Freon, usually) will leak out of the compressor. If this happens, the unit will not cool the storage space until a serviceman replaces the refrigerant.

Get the refrigerator ready

Put the refrigerator in an easily accessible area that will remain above freezing during the winter. A basement may be an ideal location.

Defrost the old unit and clean thoroughly with detergent and water. Also, wash with a solution of 2 tablespoons of household chlorine bleach (5 to 5½% sodium hypochlorite) per quart of water to help reduce fungus and other types of infection. This is particularly necessary after the unit has been used for bulb storage.

You may want to discard the ice cube trays if the freezing compartment is in the storage portion. This will give you more shelf space for bulb storage.



Sometime before storing the bulbs, plug in the cord to start the refrigeration unit and adjust the controls to maintain the desired temperature. This procedure may take some time. Use an accurate thermometer for this trial period of adjustment. Allow 12 hours or so between each adjustment of the controls to allow the unit to equalize.

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Dig bulbs and tubers after the first frost kills the tops.

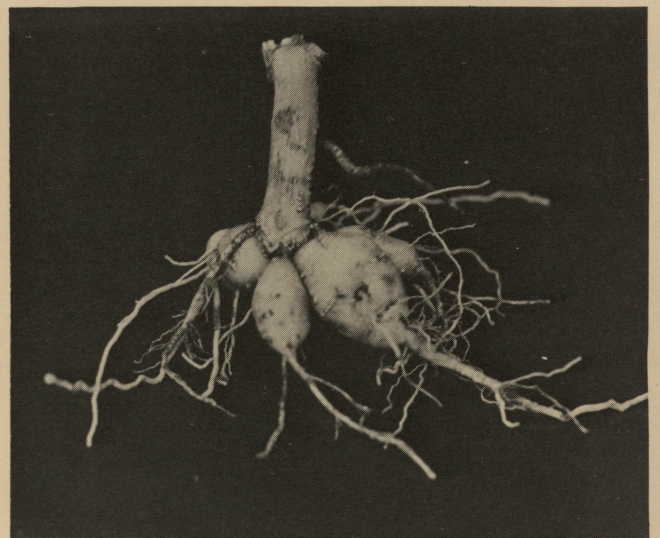
Prepare bulbs for storage

After the first frost when the leaves begin to turn yellow or blacken, but before the ground freezes, dig or lift bulbs and tubers that are not winter hardy ("glads", dahlias, cannas, etc.) Trim plant growth to about 2 inches above the soil line. Be sure to keep colors separated so that the bulbs and tubers can be marked for identification next spring. Clean the soil from the tubers by gently washing with water from a garden hose. Be careful not to break or injure eyes, buds or shoots. Dry to remove the surface moisture, then store for a few days in a cool, dark area (such as the garage) to cure the bulbs and allow the excess stem to dry. Avoid excess heat and over-drying.

Place bulbs or roots in a paper or plastic bag and dust with an insecticide and a fungicide. Shake to cover the roots with dust. Commercial bulb dusts are available that include both an insecticide and a fungicide.

After dusting, remove bulbs (or tubers) and package in paper or plastic bags with dry peat moss or vermiculite to prevent shriveling. Seal the top of the bag with tape and mark type of bulb and color of the flower.

Trim away excess stock and roots after tubers have been washed and dried.





Dry "glads" until the old corm at the base of the new corm comes off easily.

Put bulbs and tubers in plastic bags, then apply insecticide and fungicide.

Pour peat moss or vermiculite into bags with bulbs and tubers.



Tag the bags for sure identification in the spring.



Remove one or two of the packages about midway in the storage period to check for spoilage due to mold growth, rotting or excessive moisture. Throw away rotted bulbs and give the others another treatment with bulb dust.

Prepare bulbs for planting

A few days before it is time to plant the tubers or bulbs, remove them from the refrigerator. Carefully

separate them from the peat moss or vermiculite. Check for spoilage and throw away any bulbs showing mold growth.

If there is new growth showing, the bulbs should be planted within the next few days. Otherwise, keeping the bulbs in a warm, dark area should cause new growth to begin, but it is not necessary to wait for new growth before planting. The bulbs or roots should have a healthy appearance. Plant bulbs or roots in moist soil.

Special notes

1) "Glads" require a dormant period of 1½ months at 40° F or 2 months at 50° F.

2) If tulip bulbs are stored at 40-45° F for a month or so, they can then be forced to bloom indoors in a pot during the winter.

3) Dusting will probably be more effective if the dried material is first removed from the corms.

Bulbs not considered winter hardy in Idaho

Achimenes
Agapanthus
Bloomeria
Dahlia
Gladiolus
Schizostylis
Tritonia
Zephyranthes
Acidanthera
Begonia
Canna
Galtonia
Polianthes
Tigridia
Watsonia
Madeira Vine