

Prepare outdoor plants for winter months

By ELAINE GORDON

Invigorating days and cool nights subtly hint of impending frost and winter's determined creep.

Squirrels are busy hoarding food supplies among plants in the last rust of bloom. Small fruits adorn shrubs to help sustain wild birds and those misguided robins that remain. Trees are overflowing in an unequalled panorama of color. Our senses are delighted!

There's a lot to be accomplished in Autumn's presence and one of the many tasks Mother Nature has relegated before severe frost is the gentle lifting and storing of some flowering summer bulbs.

The living beauty concealed within the unattractive housing waits in readiness for next spring, but is unable to survive over winter if left in the earth.

Dig up tuberous begonias leaving as much soil as possible

adhering to tubers and with top growth still attached. Put in an airy indoor place until tops dry and break off easily.

Clean the tubers and shake them in a large paper bag containing bulb insecticide dust for disease/insect protection. Store in dry vermiculite or peat moss.

The lifting of canna lilies after foliage is flattened by the first frost is facilitated by shortening stems to 5". Air dry for a few

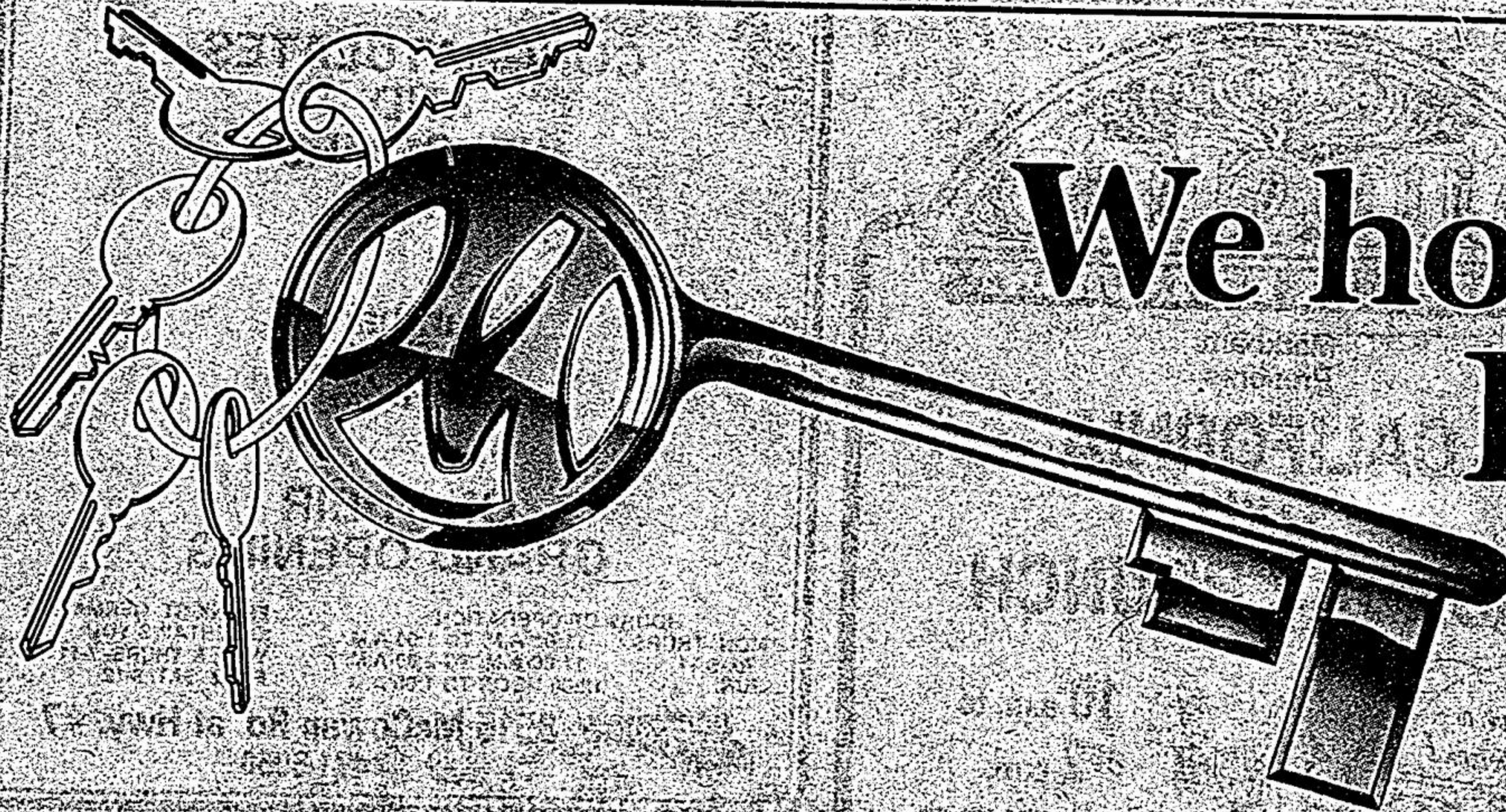
weeks and then store in a carton with soil clinging to rhizomes. (I found the cold room or placing beside our basement's outside wall an effective means.) They can also be stored in dry peat moss, vermiculite or sand.

Dahlia tubers should dry for a few weeks with 6" of stem attached. Store in dry vermiculite, peat moss or sand. Sprinkle lightly with water after a few

months if they get dry and appear to be shrivelling.

Gladolium corms must never be allowed to freeze so lift them and let dry uncovered in a cool spot for a few weeks. Dust with bulb dust and hang up in panty-hose legs or mesh onion bags.

Don't forget to label all containers with identifying colors and names before storage in a dark, airy dry location at 40 or 50 degrees F.



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