



Poinsettia Care



Poinsettias are the traditional Christmas plant, and with the introduction of long-lasting cultivars during the past several years, its popularity has increased. It was introduced to the United States in 1825 by Joel Robert Poinsett, first U.S. Ambassador to Mexico who obtained plants from the wilds of southern Mexico. The common name for the exotic plant, poinsettia, came from his last name. Botanically, the plant is known as *Euphorbia pulcherrima*.



Light

If you get a potted poinsettia for your home or office, place it near a sunny window where it will get the most available sunlight.

Temperature

To keep the plant in bloom, maintain it at a temperature of 65 to 70 degrees during the daylight hours. Since root rot disease is more prevalent at temperatures below 60 degrees, don't put the poinsettia in a room colder than this. Poinsettias are native to semi-tropical climates, so plants located outdoors should be moved indoors or to another warm area when nighttime temperatures remain below 50 degrees for several hours. In Northern California, it is recommended to keep your poinsettia indoors.

Water

Examine the soil daily, and when the surface is dry to the touch, water the soil until it runs freely out the drainage hole in the container. The amount of water recommended in the following table for use in various size containers insures that enough water will be applied so that some will run out the drainage hole. If a saucer is used, discard the water that collects in it. DO NOT leave the plant standing in water. Overly wet soil lacks sufficient air, which results in root injury. A wilted plant may drop its leaves prematurely, so try to keep it well watered. Plants exposed to high light and low humidity require more frequent watering.

Recommended Watering	
Pot Diameter	Fluid Ounces of Water per Pot
4	6
5	9
6	12
7	16
8	20

Year Round Care

For information about year round care go to <http://cagardenweb.ucdavis.edu>

Are Poinsettias Poisonous?

Various reports over the years have led the general public to believe poinsettias are toxic to humans; however, this has not been authenticated. Research conducted at the Ohio State University using rats, which have a similar digestive system to humans, tests have not shown that leaves, bracts, or cyathia (true flowers) are toxic. Although no tests have been made (officially) on humans, it is reasonable to believe the alleged poisonous nature of the plant is very questionable. Other institutions have proven the old wives' tale that poinsettias are poisonous to be false.

Adapted for northern California from: McMahon, P., C. Pasian, J. Metzger, and J. Youger-Comaty. 1996. Poinsettia Care in the Home. Ohio State Univ. Horticulture and Crop Science Department Extension Fact Sheet HYG-1248-96.

Interesting Poinsettia facts for the University of Illinois Extension

- Poinsettias are native to Mexico
- Poinsettias are not poisonous. A study at Ohio State University showed that a 50 pound child who ate 500 bracts might have a slight tummy ache.
- Some people may have skin irritation from the milky sap.
- Poinsettias represent over 85 percent of the potted plant sales during the holiday season.
- Ninety percent of all poinsettias are exported from the United States.
- Poinsettias are commercially grown in all 50 states.
- California is the top poinsettia producing state.
- December 12 is National Poinsettia Day.
- The Paul Ecke Ranch in California grows over 80 percent of poinsettias in the United States for the wholesale market. 90 percent of all the flowering poinsettias in the world get their start at the Paul Ecke Ranch.
- There are over 100 varieties of poinsettias available.
- 74 percent of Americans still prefer red poinsettias; 8 percent prefer white and 6 percent prefer pink.
- 80 percent of poinsettias are purchased by women.
- 80 percent of people who purchase poinsettias are 40 or older.
- Poinsettias are the best selling flowering potted plant in the United States. In 2004 over 61 million plants were sold.
- Poinsettias are the most popular Christmas plant even though most are sold in a 6 week period.

For gardening questions please contact the Colusa County Master Gardeners at UCCE office, 100 Sunrise Blvd, Ste E, Colusa - 458-0570

Or

Colusa County Farm Bureau office, 530 Market St, Colusa - 458-5130

