



Poinsettia Care



Our traditional holiday plant was brought to this country by the US Minister to Mexico, Joel Poinsett, in 1835. He returned to South Carolina with cuttings of this pretty Mexican wildflower. It still bears his name. Much plant breeding has produced the superior plants we grow today.

The Poinsettia is a member of the family Euphorbiacea, which also includes many succulent plants such as the "Crown of Thorns." The colored petals which we so often call the 'flower' are actually only bracts. The true flower is the yellow part in the center of the bracts called the cyathia. Poinsettias are not poisonous to people or animals.

CARE AND RE-BLOOMING OF THE POINSETTIA

LIGHT

Poinsettias prefer bright, filtered light, in a spot free from drafts and extreme heat. The life of the plant can be extended if you leave a small light burning at night, however, most of the new hybrids are colorful well into the winter.

WATERING

Let the plant semi-dry between thorough waterings. Drain off excess water. Be sure to remove water from foil wrappers when bringing them home. Average home humidity levels are fine.

FERTILIZING

No feeding is necessary while plants are blooming.

TEMPERATURE

Ideal temperature is 65-70°F. during the day; 60°F. at night. Normal home temperatures are generally adequate, provided the plant is not placed on top of a TV (the set is too hot when in use).

To grow your plant over summer and to bloom next holiday, keep it growing and cut back in May. Each time the plant grows about 4 inches, cut half of the new growth off. Water lightly and feed once a month. You may place the plant outside in summer, keeping it pruned back, and re-potting only if necessary. Cut back new shoots early in August, leaving 3-4 leaves per stem. Bring plant inside in September before temperatures become chilly at night, and put in a bright sunny window. From late September until the end of October (flower buds should be set), the plant MUST receive 14 hours total darkness at night. Even a little bit of light during this crucial time will set the plant's flowering back. Use a dark closet, or a dark unused room with curtains drawn closed to block out any street lights. Then bring the poinsettia out and continue growing it as before.