

Poinsettia Care

Poinsettias were introduced to Canada and the U.S.A. in 1852 by Joel Poinsett the U.S. Ambassador to Mexico. A colourful plant that grows in the wild in Mexico, it has been cultured and hybridized over the years and has become one of the symbols of the Christmas season. Our garden centres carry many varieties of poinsettias from the traditional red to creamy white, burgundy, pink and several multi-toned varieties.

Here are some tips to help you keep your poinsettia looking gorgeous throughout the holiday and then some!
Portions of this information sheet have been provided by Paul Ecke Ranch.

SELECTING A HEALTHY POINSETTIA

Choose plants with thoroughly coloured and expanded bracts. The bracts are the colourful part of the poinsettia, while the true flowers are the small yellow centers. Look for plants with dense, plentiful foliage all the way to the soil line. The plant should be about 2 ½ times larger than its pot size. Select plants with strong, stiff stems and no signs of wilting. Be wary of plants displayed in paper, plastic or mesh sleeves, for these can reduce air flow.

GARDENWORKS has an excellent selection of varieties and sizes to choose from and we carry the best quality poinsettias available.

HOW TO CARE FOR YOUR POINSETTIA

- Place your plants in indirect sunlight for at least six hours per day.
- Provide room temperatures between 16° -21° C.
- Water your plants thoroughly when the soil feels dry to the touch.
- Use a large roomy shopping bag to protect your plants when transporting them.
- Fertilize your plants after the blooming season with a balanced, all-purpose fertilizer.

DON'TS

- Don't place plants near cold drafts or excessive heat
- Don't expose your plants to temperatures below 10° C (50° F).
- Don't allow plants to sit in standing water.
- Don't fertilize your plants when they are in bloom.
- Don't expose your plants to chilling winds when transporting.

AFTER THE HOLIDAYS

With proper care, your poinsettia can last long past the holiday season. Here's how: By early April, when the coloured bracts begin to turn or fall, cut the plant back leaving four to six buds. Keep the plant near a sunny window, water and fertilize regularly, and by the end of May, you should see vigorous new growth. Cut your plant back again around July 4th and again by Labour Day to promote compact, full growth. Continue to nurture your plant as Autumn nears.

The Poinsettia begins to set buds and produce flowers as the nights become longer. Beginning October 1, keep the plant in complete darkness for 14 continuous hours each night by moving plants into a dark room or placing a large box over them. During the day, allow six to eight hours of bright sunlight. Continue this for eight to ten weeks, and your plants will develop a colourful display of holiday blooms!

POINSETTIAS ARE NOT POISONOUS!

The "old wives' tale" that poinsettias are poisonous is simply not true. Scientific investigations have disproved the charge that poinsettias are harmful. In fact, the Poisindex® Information Service states that over 500 leaves ingested by a 20kg (50lb) child would demonstrate no toxicity. Of course, like all ornamental plants, the poinsettia is not intended for human consumption. (And who has room for a poinsettia after all the other holiday goodies!)

