



Poinsettias



POINSETTIA CARE

When removing your poinsettia from the sleeve, tear from the bottom up. This will help prevent damage to the plant.

WATER

Examine the soil daily. When the surface of the soil is dry to the touch, water slowly until the water runs freely from the drainage holes on the bottom of the pot. If a saucer is used, discard any standing water. If the plant has been placed in a foil pot cover, remove the foil when watering. Once the water has finished draining, the plant can be placed back in the foil pot cover. Constantly moist or overly wet soil lacks sufficient air which results in root injury.

A wilted plant may drop leaves prematurely, so check the soil frequently. (A wilting plant in moist soil may indicate the roots have begun to rot.) If wilting does occur & the soil is dry, immediately water, and five minutes later, water again. Plants in high light & low humidity require more frequent watering.

LIGHT

Place the plant near a sunny window where it will have the most available sunlight. A window facing south, west, or east is better than one facing north. Avoid contact between the plant & cold windowpanes.

TEMPERATURE

To keep the plant in color, maintain it at a temperature of 65 to 70 degrees during the daylight hours. If possible, move it to a cooler place at night. Root rot is more prevalent at temps below 60 degrees, so avoid this. Do not expose poinsettias to hot or cold drafts, which may cause stress or leaf drop.

REBLOOMING

If you like the challenge of getting your poinsettia to rebloom next year, these tips will help ensure the best results:

Continue to water & maintain the plant indoors until after the last frost in spring. If the plant becomes leggy, you can cut the stems back to 6", but this is best done before April. This is the best time to repot in a larger pot with fresh potting mix, if needed. Begin feeding with an all-purpose plant food, once every two weeks. Once the outdoor temps at night are reliably above 50 degrees, move the plant outdoors to a spot with direct morning sun, but shaded in the hot afternoon.

If needed, you can shape the plant by pinching the lateral (side) branches in August. (Removed tips can also be rooted for new plants at this time.) Avoid pruning the terminal (central/upward growing tips), or pruning later than August, as this can interfere or delay formation of the colorful bracts.

In the fall, before temperatures begin to fall below 45 degrees, bring the plant indoors. (It is always a good idea to check & treat any plant for insects before doing this!) Stop feeding the plant once you bring it inside.

Poinsettias require short days & long nights to bloom. To accomplish this, beginning in September, your plant will need 10 hours of daylight (in a sunny window), and 14 hours of complete darkness (such as in an unused closet), on a daily basis. (Varying from this even slightly can interfere with or delay bract formation.) Continue moving the plant from light to darkness for 8-10 weeks, until the bracts begin to form & show color. Keep it in a sunny window until it is time to take it outdoors again.

PLANT TOXICITY

Contrary to popular belief, poinsettias are not toxic to humans or domestic animals. However, ingestion of any part of the plant may cause nausea or vomiting. It is best to keep young children and pets away from these plants.

Poinsettias belong to the genus Euphorbia. The sap (a milky white liquid) of all Euphorbia may cause agitation, irritation or rashes for those with sensitive skin.

BRACTS & BLOOMS

Many consider the colorful bracts (modified or pseudo-leaves) to be the flower of the poinsettia. In fact, the flowers are yellow, & will appear at the center of the bracts in clusters.