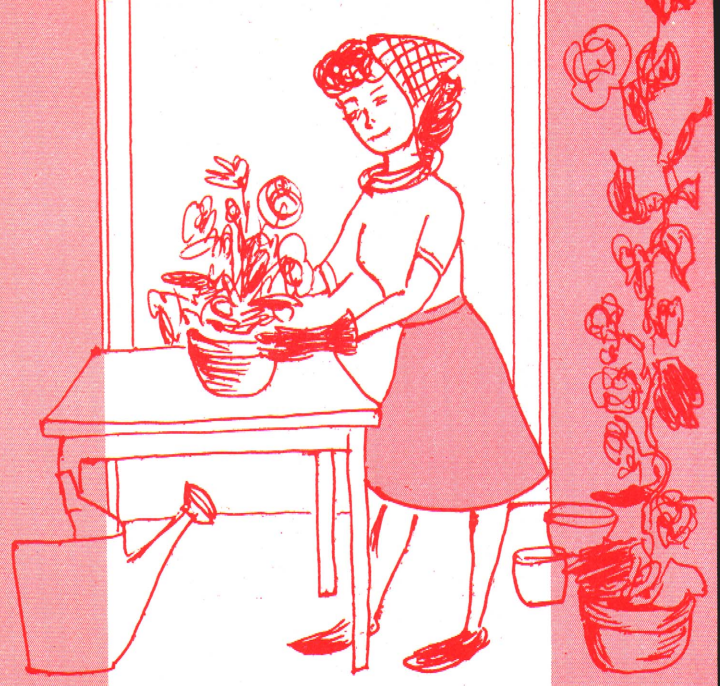


Care of House and Garden Plants

Hints on Growing POINSETTIAS

Cooperative Extension Service Michigan State University



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Poinsettias are traditional Christmas flowering plants which will last throughout the Christmas season and may be grown on to flower next year.

Selecting the plant:

- Look for plants with green foliage all the way to the soil, which indicates good root systems and healthy disease-free plants.
- Select those with the least pollen showing on fresh looking true flowers (those red or green button-like parts in the center of the colorful bracts).

Christmas care:

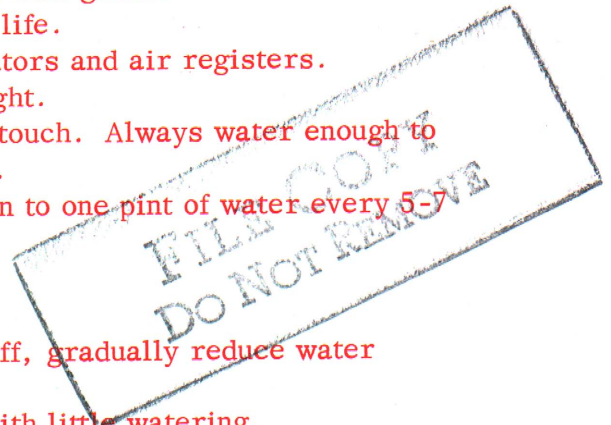
- Place near a sunny window; do not let plant contact cold glass.
- Temperature above 70°F will cause shorter bloom life.
- Avoid cold or hot air drafts; keep away from radiators and air registers.
- If possible, move to a cooler room (55-60°F) at night.
- Examine soil daily. Water when soil is dry to the touch. Always water enough to soak the soil to bottom of the pot, and discard excess water.
- Apply a 20-0-0 fertilizer at the rate of 1/4 teaspoon to one pint of water every 5-7 days.

After flowering:

- When about half the leaves and bracts have fallen off, gradually reduce water applications until the soil is completely dry.
- Store the dormant plant in basement at about 50° with little watering.

Summer care:

- When new growth starts, cut back old stems to about 4" and repot the plant.
- Fresh soil mix should be porous to allow free drainage--2 parts soil, 1 part peat, 1 part sand.
- After spring frost danger is past and night temperatures exceed 50°, sink the poinsettia pot to the rim in a well drained position out of doors.
- Apply a 20-20-20 fertilizer once each month, at the rate recommended by the manufacturer.



- For a short branching plant pinch out the growing shoot tips when there are two (2) fully expanded leaves on each shoot. Do not pinch after mid-August.
- For a tall plant do not pinch, or pinch once to obtain desired shape.

Diseases and pest control:

- Out of doors your poinsettia will be subject to attack by several common garden diseases and pests.
- A spray containing both insecticide and fungicide can be used every 10-14 days, for regular protection:

50%

DDT/wettable powder 2 tablespoons,

Captan 50% emulsifiable concentration, 1 1/4 tablespoons, and Malathion 50% emulsion 2 teaspoons, in 1 gallon of water.

- Bacterial attack causes brown spots and water-soaked patches on all parts of the plant, with malformation of the younger leaves and growing points. The only way to eliminate this is to dispose of infected plants.

Caution: do not spray plants with pesticides in the house. Remove to a garage or outside if weather permits. Always keep pesticides away from children.

Fall care:

- Take the poinsettia plant indoors at the end of August.
- Place in sunny position as before.
- Flowers will initiate only if plant is kept in complete darkness between 5 p.m. and 8 a.m. daily from the end of September until color shows in the bracts - about mid-December.
- Night temperature should be between 60 and 70°F.

Propagation:

- This is done by taking cuttings from healthy growing plants between July 1 and September 1.
- Root cuttings in sand or other well-drained medium.
- Pot up when rooted and treat as mature plants.

For further information on poinsettia growing, see Extension Bulletin 511 in the Home and Family Series (December 1965), available from the Cooperative Extension Service, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.