



## POINSETTIA

*Euphorbia pulcherrima*, the most beautiful euphorbia, also known as the poinsettia, was discovered in Mexico and brought to the US in 1825 by the first US ambassador to Mexico, Joel Robert Poinsett.

This Christmas flowering plant is NOT poisonous, in fact, the Aztecs once used the latex sap to control fevers and the colored bracts were used to make a reddish dye. People with sensitive skin may have a reaction to the sap but one would have to ingest copious amounts to even get a belly ache...though we don't recommend eating poinsettias. The poinsettia is also listed among the top ten most effective plants at cleaning the air of harmful pollutants.

To keep your poinsettia happy, place it in a brightly lit spot out of direct sun. Avoid cold or hot drafts and water well when the soil feels dry. If you want to keep your decorative pot cover, be sure to cut some holes in the bottom to prevent over-watering. No need to fertilize your poinsettia until it is finished blooming.

Some of the newer cultivars will bloom for months. When your poinsettia has finally finished showcasing its colorful bracts, cut it back to about 8" to promote a nice bushy specimen. Come early June it will be time to repot into a slightly larger container and move outdoors. Make sure to keep the poinsettia in filtered light and water with a balanced fertilizer so that the plant will create another beautiful display this coming winter.

Move your poinsettia indoors before the first fall frost. The poinsettia is a photoperiodic plant which means that the onset of winter with shorter days and longer nights initiate the blooming season. Your poinsettia will naturally change color around November 1<sup>st</sup> if it only receives natural light. Any artificial light received after sunset will disrupt the cycle and the plant will not bloom. If you want to ensure blooms make sure you have a room that stays completely dark at night or cover the plant with a big box every night at sunset and remove in the morning. This is necessary starting Oct 1<sup>st</sup> for Christmas blooms. It takes about 8-10 weeks for the color change to occur.

If you have any questions about your poinsettia, please just ask any of our employees. They will be glad to help!

