

# Poinsettia Care

## Shopping Tips

Think about the following tips while making your poinsettia selection.

Avoid plants with foliage that is beginning to yellow. The actual flowers of the poinsettia plant are the golden yellow clusters (cyathias) in the center of the colored bracts. The colored bracts are actually the plant's leaves that change color to attract pollinators. When you choose your poinsettia make sure the plant you choose still has the bright golden yellow clusters in the center.

Avoid purchasing poinsettias that have been left in the plastic wrapping. This could cause the leaves to yellow and drop before the holiday season is over. A protective sleeve should be placed on the plant to shelter it from cold temperatures on its way from the store to home. The poinsettia should be taken home and unwrapped as soon as possible. Leaving the plant in an unheated car while you continue to shop will cause cold injury.

## Home Care

Put your plant in a spot with bright natural light, but not exposed to direct sunlight for more than one to two hours. If it's in a sunny location, check often to make sure the poinsettia doesn't get too dry. Place in an area that is protected from drafts, heat from appliances, radiators or ventilation ducts.

Pierce the bottom of the pot cover or foil wrapper for proper drainage. Remove the water from the saucer after watering.

Place your poinsettia in a spot where temperatures do not exceed 75 degrees Fahrenheit during the day and above 60 degrees Fahrenheit at night.



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## How to reflower your poinsettia

February: Color may begin to fade. Keep plant near a sunny window.

April: In the middle of the month cut the stems back to approximately 6 inches above the soil.

May: Start fertilizing with a balanced (20/20/20 or 20/10/20) fertilizer, using one teaspoon per gallon of water, every third watering.

June: Remove the plant from the pot and check root system to see if the plant needs repotting. If you do repot, use sterile, commercial potting mix and a slightly larger pot. (Place in clean container only 1 or 2 inches wider in diameter.) When the temperature does not fall below 55 degrees, you can place the plant outside in light shade. The plant can also remain indoors. Fertilize with one teaspoon of a balanced fertilizer per gallon of water every second time you water.

August: During the middle of the month bring the plant back inside, place in direct sunlight and cut the stems back again, this time leave three to four leaves per shoot. Continue to water and fertilize.

September: In the middle of the month, allow the plant to remain in direct sunlight (next to a bright window) until 5 p.m. From 5 p.m. to 8 a.m. the plant must be placed in total darkness. This regimen must be continued daily until December 1.



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