

REFLOWERING DIRECTIONS AT A GLANCE

- April 1:** Reduce watering, keep at 60°.
- Mid-May:** Cut back stems to 3-6 inches above the soil. Re-pot. Place in sunny window and water when soil is dry to touch.
- Early June:** Move plant outside. Water and fertilize more frequently as plant grows. Pinch plant back.
- Mid-July:** Pinch plant back again.
- August 1:** Bring plant indoors to sunny location, 65° to 75°.
- Early September:** For early December bloom, initiate "short days" for period of 10 weeks. Keep in darkness from 5 p.m. to 8 a.m. and in sunny window during daytime. Water as needed and fertilize weekly.
- Early December:** When color appears, discontinue "short days."

POISONOUS PLANT?

NO. Poinsettias have been accused of being toxic; however, research has proved this old wives' tale to be false. The leaves, stems, bracts, and flowers are not toxic to people or pets!

Caring for Your Poinsettia



*Georgia Mountains
Master Gardeners*

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A Brief History of the Poinsettia

Poinsettia (*Euphorbia pulcherrima*) is popular in many American homes at Christmas. The poinsettia is native to southern Mexico and is named after Joel R. Poinsett, the first U.S. ambassador to Mexico, who introduced the plant to the U.S. in 1825.

Water

Examine the soil daily, and when the surface is dry to the touch, water the soil until it runs freely out the drainage hole in the container. The amount of water recommended below ensures that enough water will be applied so that some will run out the drainage hole. If a saucer is used, discard the water that collects in it. If the plant gets too dry and wilting occurs, immediately water with the recommended amount and then water again 5 minutes later.

4 inch pot	6 oz. water
6 inch pot	12 oz. water
8 inch pot	20 oz. water

Light

Place your poinsettia near a sunny window where it will have the most available sunlight. A window that faces south, east or west is better than one facing north. Do not let any part of the plant touch the cold windowpane because this may injure it.

Temperature

To keep the plant in bloom, maintain it at a temperature of 65° to 70° during the day and, if possible, move it to a cooler place at night. Avoid exposing the plant to hot or cold drafts.

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Reflowering

Poinsettias can be reflowered the following Christmas if a yearlong schedule of care is observed. Continue normal watering until the **first of April**; then allow it to dry gradually. Following the drying period, store the plant in a cool (60°), airy place with indirect light.

In **mid-May**, cut the stems back to about 4 inches above the soil. Then replant in a pot 1 to 2 inches larger in diameter. Use a pot with good drainage and a quality potting soil. Water the soil thoroughly after potting; wait 5 minutes, and water again. Put the plant near a sunny window. Keep it at 65° to 70° and water when the surface of the soil is dry to the touch. After new growth appears, fertilize every 2 weeks with a complete water-soluble fertilizer for flowering plants.

When the minimum outdoor temperature is consistently above 60° (usually **early June**), leave the plant in the pot, move it outdoors, and place it in a lightly shaded location; continue watering and fertilizing as above. Pinch each stem by removing 1 inch of terminal growth and leaving 4-5 leaves per stem. Pinch again in **mid-July**.

At the **beginning of August**, bring the plant indoors and again place it near a window with a sunny exposure. Keep it at 65° to 70° at night and continue watering and fertilizing.

To have the plant in full flower before Christmas, keep it in complete darkness (such as a closet) between 5 p.m. and 8 a.m. beginning in **early September** and near a sunny window in the daytime. When color is visible, it is not necessary to keep the poinsettia in complete darkness during the night. Continue fertilizing the plant until mid-December.

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