



Caring For Your Poinsettia

After the Holidays

Winter: *January – March*

When flower bracts start fading in color it is time to put the plant into dormancy. Don't worry if your poinsettia does not show signs of fading until late March; every plant is different. To induce dormancy, heavily prune the plant back to 4-8" tall, leaving one or two leaves per stem. After pruning, decrease the amount of water so that the top inch of the soil is dry before re-applying water. Keep the plant in a cool (60 degrees F) location and do not fertilize.

Spring: *April-June*

By mid to late April, slowly increase the frequency of watering and fertilize with a full strength, flowering plant food with a 1:1:1 ratio like Osmocote. By late May, the plant should be growing vigorously and ready to repot. Transplant the poinsettia into a pot 2-4" larger in diameter, adding new potting soil, and thoroughly watering after repotting. By June 1st, it should be warm enough to put your poinsettia outside where temperatures need to be consistently above 60 degrees F. Slowly transition it into a part-shade area (4-6 hours of direct sunlight), shelter it from dry winds, keep a close eye on soil moisture, and treat it as if it is one of your summer annuals.

Summer: *July-September*

In early July, pinch back each stem about 1-2", then again early September. The pinching will create a fuller, well branched plant. Continue to maintain your poinsettia outdoors until the evening temperatures drop below 55 degrees F, then bring it in. Treat your plant for insects with Systemic Insect Control before bringing them indoors at the end of summer. Inside your home, place the poinsettia near a sunny window, keep in 60-70 degrees F, and continue watering and fertilizing.

Autumn: *October-November*

Poinsettias are short day/long night plants that trigger into flowering as the daylight shortens to 12 hours or less. The flower bracts begin to color-up exposed to shorter days too, within 8-10 weeks. Therefore, the beginning of October is the perfect time to start a strict lighting schedule, exposing the poinsettia to bright, indirect sunlight from 8 a.m.-5 p.m., then using a closet, cardboard box, or paper bag to cover and simulate complete darkness from 5 p.m.-8 a.m. Any light exposure at night time (5 p.m.-8 a.m.) can delay the flowering cycle. Continue to feed your poinsettia until it starts to flush with color and produce flower buds. Keep the soil evenly moist to slightly dry. Mid to late November, the bracts should start to develop and at this point you have successfully grown your poinsettia year round! Keep the plant in bright, indirect light, water when the soil is dry to the touch, do not fertilize, and enjoy the year long work you have accomplished and the approaching holidays!