



Poinsettia Facts

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Nothing says, "Get ready for Christmas!" more than a beautiful Poinsettia. But do you know the history behind the popular Christmas flower? The "Flor de Noche Buena" or Christmas Eve Flower, as Poinsettias are known in their native Mexico and Central America habitat, is a tropical woody shrub that can reach up to 10 feet tall. The Aztecs who used the bracts called them 'cuitlaxochitl', the colorful modified leaves surrounding the yellow flowers, for dye and the milky sap as a fever reducer.

Poinsettias began their association with Christmas in the 17th century when Franciscan friars included them in their Christmas celebrations. The star-shaped patterns of the leaves symbolize the Star of Bethlehem and the red color represents Jesus' blood sacrifice.

The popularity of the plant in the United States is due to one man, Joel Roberts Poinsett, the Poinsettia's namesake. Poinsett was the first U.S. Minister to Mexico as well as a botanist and physician. He was intrigued by the winter flower and brought it back to his South Carolina greenhouse for cultivation in the 1830's.

Caring for Your Poinsettia All Year

During the Christmas Holiday:

- Keep your Poinsettia in a bright, indirect light location inside
- Water when potting mix begins to feel dry to the touch
- Keep away from hot or cold drafts
- Begin fertilizing after color begins to fade
- Protect from temperatures below 50°F

After the Christmas Holiday to Early Autumn:

- Place Poinsettia in a sunny indoor location and keep soil barely moist
- Trim to about 8" tall after leaves fall in the Spring, keep watered and fertilized
- When new growth appears repot and take outside, fertilize weekly and give morning sun
- Pinch a quarter of the tips of the Poinsettia back to encourage branching
- Bring indoors when night temperatures fall below 50°F

From October 1 to December 15:

- Place in a dark place from 5PM to 8AM. Make sure absolutely NO light breaks this dark time
- Give 6-8 hours for sun per day
- After bracts start to color, discontinue long nights and fertilizer
- Place poinsettia in its final holiday location!

Enjoy your Poinsettia!