

## **Poinsettia** (*Euphorbia pulcherrima*)

Christmas decoration or plant lover's challenge?

flowers (bracts) should last for 2—6 months.

### General Care

- **Temperature:** keep above 60oF while flowering.
- **Light:** Bright light during winter, keep away from drafts – In summer, keep out of direct sun if plant is to be kept for next Christmas.
- **Water:** Water thoroughly - wait until soil is moderately dry before watering again. Water immediately if leaves begin to wilt. Water more in summer.
- **Air Humidity:** Mist plant frequently during while flowering.
- **After Flowering Care:** Discard or keep to rebloom next year. For reblooming follow instructions below.
- **Propagation:** Take stem cuttings in early summer. Use a rooting hormone.

### Reblooming your poinsettia

When the leaves have fallen, cut back the stems so they are 4 in. high. The soil should be kept almost dry and the pot placed in a shady spot. In early May, water and repot the plant, replacing some of the old soil. Continue watering and shoots will appear. Feed regularly and remove some of the new growth to leave several of the strongest new stems. From the end of September, carefully control the light. Cover with a black garbage bag, or put in a room that gets ONLY natural light. Your poinsettia needs to be in darkness for 14 hours each night. Continue daily for 8 weeks, then treat normally. Your Poinsettia will already be in bloom again at Christmas time.

### Problem Solutions

Loss of flower heads; leaf edges turning yellow or brown

The most common cause is dry air. Poinsettias need moist air - mist plant frequently.

Insects

Red spider mite and mealy bug are the main pests. Use a houseplant pesticide, following container instructions.

Leaves wilt, then fall

Overwatering is the likely reason; the surface of the soil must be dry before water is applied. Failure to water often enough can also cause leaves to wilt and fall.

Leaves fall with No wilting

If the plant is in a spot that's too cold, or If has been subjected to hot or freezing drafts then the leaves will fail. Another cause of leaf fall is poor light.