

Poinsettia

The poinsettia requires bright light and should be kept away from drafts. A temperature between 65 and 70 degrees Fahrenheit. is ideal. Avoid temperatures below 60 degrees and above 75 degrees. Keep plants well watered but do not over- water. Some of the newer, long-lasting varieties can be kept attractive all winter.



Gardeners frequently ask whether they can carry their poinsettias over to bloom again next year. It is questionable whether the results are worth the effort as the quality of home-grown plants seldom equals that of commercially grown plants. However, for those who wish to try, the following procedure can be followed.

After the bracts fade or fall, set the plants where they will receive indirect light and temperatures around 55 to 60 degrees Fahrenheit. Water sparingly during this time, just enough to keep the stems from shriveling. Cut the plants back to within about 5 inches from the ground and re-pot in fresh soil. As soon as new growth begins, place in a well lighted window. After danger of frost, place the pot out of doors in a partially shaded spot. Pinch the new growth back to get a plant with several stems. Do not pinch after September 1. About Labor Day, or as soon as the nights are cool, bring the plant indoors. Continue to grow them in a sunny room with a night temperature of about 65 degrees Fahrenheit.

The poinsettia blooms only during short days. To initiate blooms, exclude artificial light, either by covering with a light-proof box each evening or placing in an unlighted room or closet for a minimum of 12 hours of darkness. Plants require full light in the daytime, so be sure to return them to a sunny window. Start the short day treatment in about mid-September to have blooms between December 1 and Christmas.