Caring for Your

Poinsettia

Poinsettias are the classic holiday plant. With proper care they can last well past Christmas, and even rebloom the following year. Here are tips for preserving their freshness and beauty.

Light

- Bright, indirect light is ideal (east or west window).
- Require at least 6 hours of bright light daily. If light is too low, leaves drop and bracts fade.
- Avoid direct afternoon sun in very hot climates to prevent scorched leaves.

Temperature

- Day: 65-75℉ / Night: 60-75℉
- Poinsettias dislike cold temperatures. Keep away from drafts, heating vents, fireplaces, and exterior doors.
- Temperatures below 50℉ can cause leaf drop or damage.

Watering

- The top killer of a poinsettia is overwatering. Water ONLY when the top 1 to 2 inches of soil feel completely dry (usually every 7-10 days).
- Water thoroughly until it runs out the bottom, then empty the saucer or foil wrapper. Never let the plant sit in water.
- If the plant came wrapped in decorative foil, poke holes in the bottom or remove it while watering.
- Under-watering signs: wilting, yellow lower leaves
- Over-watering signs: yellow leaves and mushy stems; root rot.

Humidity

- Average household humidity is fine.
- If your home is very dry (common in winter), mist lightly or place on a pebble tray filled with water.

Fertilizer

- No fertilizer needed while it’s in color (Nov-Feb).
- Once bracts fade (usually Feb-Mar), start fertilizing every 3-4 weeks, with a balanced houseplant fertilizer (e.g., 20-20-20) at half strength.

Poinsettia
Extended Care

After the Holidays (Keeping it Alive Past January)

1. Continue normal care until spring.
2. In Mar-Apr, when bracts fade and drop:
    - cut the plant back to 6-8 inches tall
    - reduce watering slightly and stop fertilizing
3. May: Repot into a slightly larger pot if root-bound. Use well-draining potting mix.
4. Late May-Jun (after last frost): You can put the poinsettia outside in a slightly shaded spot and gradually move it into the morning sun.

How to Make it Re-bloom Next Christmas (Requires Strict Light Control Starting Oct 1)

1. October 1 to December: Provide 14-16 hours of complete darkness every night:
    - from 5PM - 8AM, put in a completely dark closet, box, or unused room
    - even 10 minutes of light can prevent blooming. Light sources include streetlights, phone screens, etc).
    - Daytime: give bright light (south window or grow light)
2. Keep temperature at night below 70°F if possible.
3. Continue normal watering/fertilizing
4. By late November you should see color returning to the bracts.

Common Problems and Fixes

- Leaves dropping — the poinsettia is too cold, too wet, or experienced a sudden temperature change
- Whiteflies or spider mites — rinse with water and treat with insecticidal soap or neem oil
- Bracts pale — not enough light

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