

Poinsettias

POINTS ON POINS



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History

First cultivated by the Aztecs, the flowers were symbols of purity. A reddish dye was made from the bracts. Medicinally a preparation was made from the latex and used to counteract fevers.



Joel Poinsett, the first U.S. ambassador to Mexico and botanist who brought the poinsettia to the United States.



By 1902, Albert Ecke, newly arrived in the United States from Germany via Switzerland, began farming in the Eagle Rock area in Los Angeles. In 1906, moved his farm and family to Hollywood and began raising field-grown flowers for local markets. Around 1909, the family started growing field grown poinsettias. Albert had acquired the first varieties from neighbors who were using the plants for landscaping. From 1923 until the 1960s, all of the principle cultivars of any commercial importance were selections or sports from the 'Oak Leaf' seedling. Most of these cultivars were selected and developed by Paul Ecke Sr. of Encinitas. Many were named after Ecke family members.





Paul Ecke Jr. took over the family business in 1963 and expanded it heavily. Paul Ecke III took over Ecke Ranch in 1992 and started the business in Guatemala. In 2012 he sold the company and it was taken over by Dummen Orange in 2015.



www.alamy.com - FCCPTB

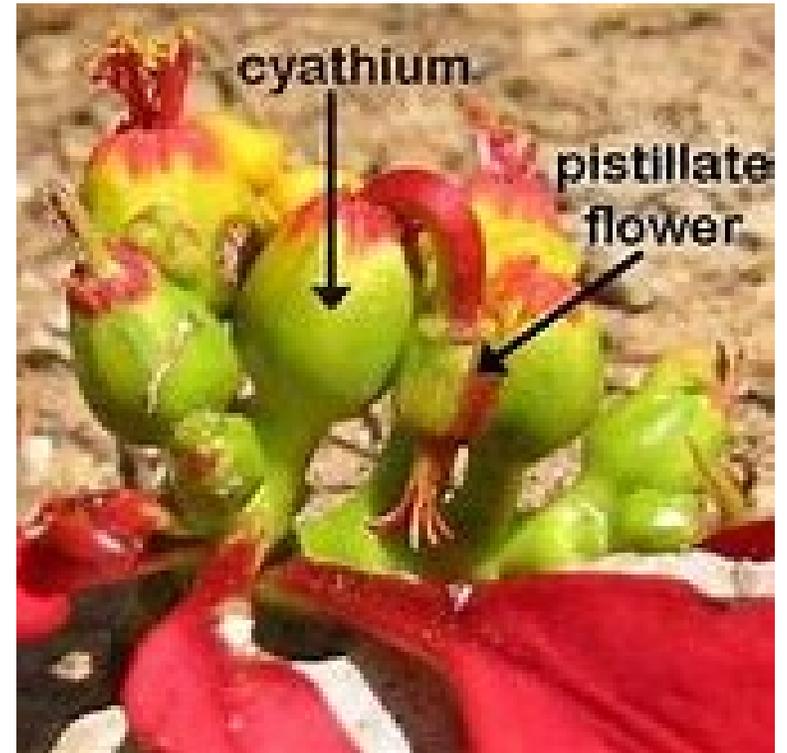
FACTS

Species-Euphorbia
pulcherrima

Family-Euphorbiaceae

It is a deciduous shrub
reaching 15 feet in its
native Mexico.

The genus Euphorbia is large, containing 1,600 to 2,000 species. All species are characterized by a single female (pistillate) flower, without petals and usually without sepals, surrounded by individual male (staminate) flowers that are enclosed in a cup-shaped structure called a cyathium (plural is cyathia)



Cultivars

In the last 30 years, so many new varieties available but 80 percent are red, followed by pink, white and peach.





Response Group

This is the number of weeks from the start of short days to a salable plant.

These response times are further classified into three general groups: early, mid and late-season cultivars. By selecting cultivars from each response group, growers can have Poinsettias available in peak condition throughout the sale season, which is mid November through Christmas.

The desired finished plant size also have an effect on cultivar selection. Many mass merchandisers want small, compact plants, while florists may want more traditionally proportioned plants and institutions such as churches may prefer tall plants.

Many growers also select cultivars based on the perceived sturdiness of those cultivars and freedom from stem breakage during handling.

Four Ways to Start a Poinsettia Crop



1. Cuttings-to grow stock plants,
2. to root in house for production



3. Rooted cuttings-to be transplanted into pots

4. Order prefinished plants already established in the final container.



For either cuttings or rooted cuttings, make sure to water the potting medium so it is moist. Never plant into dry soil. Plant shallow. Deep planting can cause poor root development and increase the potential for disease. If the cuttings were rooted in artificial cubes or blocks, do not plant too high or the propagation material will act as a wick and dry out the roots.





Poinsettias are heavy feeders, especially during the vegetative production stages. Fertilization should begin as soon after potting as possible. Application rates between 300-400 ppm nitrogen using a high calcium fertilizer, like Peters 15-5-15.

Pinching

The removal of the terminal growing point is necessary to stimulate the growth of lateral shoots, of which each will produce a flower. Typically a 6" pot will have 5-6 flowers.

The major controlling factor is the timing of the pinch.

Poinsettia is a short-day plant for floral initiation, needing $11 \frac{3}{4}$ to $12 \frac{1}{2}$ hours (depending on cultivar) when the night temperature is less than 70 degrees. Natural photoperiods become short enough between Sept. 18-25. Most cultivars come into full flower 7-10 weeks later in late November or December.

Mira Costa Crop

Just after potting to 6" from the rooted plugs we purchased in.



Mira Costs Students grow the crop

Students do all the weekly
maintenance of checking for pH,
fertility rates and bugs.



Scouting for insects

The 10" crop just starting to turn color.



Almost ready

Ready for sale this week. This picture was taken 2 weeks ago.



Three varieties grown

Two greenhouses at Mira Costa
where we grow 2,000 6" and 4"
pots.



Red, white and multicolored

This is the multicolored spotted
variety, just starting to turn. Each 6"
pot have 7 plus flowers.



Can Poinsettias grow outside?

YES, in the right climate
and with the correct
planting location and care.

Start treating the plant well as soon as it arrives.

- Water when the soil when it starts to dry out.
- Place in a sunny location in your home, protected from air currents.



Planting outside

Find a location that is sunny but protected from harsh winds, which can damage them quickly.

Choose a spot with slightly acidic, well-draining soil to avoid root rot.

After the holidays and once blooming has ceased, limit the amount of watering so the plant can go dormant until spring.

Once all of the leaves have died back, prune the bushes back to two buds and keep it in a bright location. Usually around March or April, regular watering can be resumed and fertilizing can begin. You can start planting poinsettia outdoors after all chances of frost have passed.

Frost date in Temecula

Fertilize with a water soluble fertilizer every two weeks.

May Not Be Pretty

Beauty is yet to come.



Poinsettias
outside tend to
grow tall and
leggy.

Prevent this by regular
trimming, pinching back
the tips of new growth,
creating a bushier plant.
Pinching can be done until
about the middle of
August.



Once fall has returned, with shorter days:

Reduce the amount of fertilizer

Bring potted plants back inside, limiting watering in September;/October and give the bright daylight temperatures between 65-70 F.



They need total darkness at night with cooler temps of around 60 F. Once the flower bracts have developed color, you can reduce the amount of darkness and increase the water.











