

Poinsettia



NOTE: It is extremely unlikely that a cat or dog would eat enough poinsettia to require veterinary care, as it would take hundreds of leaves to cause serious issues, and the plant's bitter taste is a deterrent. Ingesting a small amount can cause mild gastrointestinal upset, such as vomiting, drooling, or diarrhea, but these symptoms are typically self-limiting. So, while the claim that poinsettias are deadly poisonous is exaggerated, they are not meant to be eaten.

Euphorbia pulcherrima

- **Uses:** They add a festive flair to homes and public spaces, especially during the winter holidays. Poinsettias are a popular holiday gift, symbolizing good will and community spirit. *Like many houseplants, poinsettias can help improve indoor air quality by removing common pollutants like formaldehyde from the air.*
- **Exposure/Soil:** To care for a poinsettia, provide bright, indirect light and keep it in a room with stable temperatures between 60–70°, away from drafts and heaters. Water it thoroughly when the top inch of soil feels dry, making sure the pot drains and the saucer is emptied to prevent root rot. For reblooming, trim the plant back after the holidays, and beginning in September, provide 14 hours of uninterrupted darkness for 8-10 weeks.
- **Growth:** Most common poinsettias you find in stores are often kept under 2 feet tall, although some larger varieties can reach up to 3 feet. Height varies by cultivar, but some can grow 10-15 feet tall in its native habitat in S America.
- **Hardiness:** Zone 9-11, Annual/ Tropical/Houseplant. Bring inside in the winter.
- **Foliage:** Their vibrant colored bracts (modified leaves) come in an array of colors which vary by cultivar.
- **Flower:** The flowers of poinsettias are somewhat inconspicuous yellow flowers in clusters in the middle of the colorful bracts. If given good care in the home, poinsettias should remain attractive for 2 to 3 months. Toss the poinsettia when you grow tired of it or it becomes unattractive. For those home gardeners who enjoy a challenge, it is possible to get the poinsettia to bloom again next season (see above care).

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