



How to care for your poinsettias from The Live Oaks Garden Club

1. Poinsettias break easily. Lift by pot, not by the cellophane outer wrap. Cut the outer wrap to remove it, and unwrap carefully. If you are keeping the gold foil wrap on the plant, cut a large hole in the bottom of the foil so water can drain into a saucer.
2. Place in good light, but not in direct sun; in a sunny east or west location is best. Six hours of light daily is ideal.
3. Keep poinsettias away from warm or cold drafts, air registers or open doors and windows.
4. Ideally, poinsettias require daytime temperatures of 60 to 70 degrees, and night time temps around 55 degrees. High temperatures will shorten the plant's life. Temps below 50 can cause severe damage.
5. These plants come to us fairly dry. Check the soil when you pick up your plants and every day.
6. One easy way to water the potting mix in which the plants are growing without flooding the living room is to use ice cubes when applying moisture, i.e., 8 ice cubes per day.
7. Water when soil is dry, i.e., when surface of the soil feels dry to the touch. Water slowly until you begin to see water seep through holes at the bottom, about half a cup of water. After about 10 minutes, remove any excess water from the saucer.
8. If the plant wilts or the potting mix in which it is growing feels dry, water the plant – then begin the daily ice cube watering schedule again. Poinsettias are closely related to many desert plants. Their first response to dry conditions is to drop their leaves in order to cut down water loss. Plants should be checked weekly for moisture content of the potting medium, i.e., if moist, then continue the ice cube regiment; if not, water (soak) the roots.
9. If leaves begin to droop from being left too long without water, water right away, wait 5 minutes, then water a second time.
10. Fertilize the poinsettia if you keep it past the holiday season. Apply a houseplant fertilizer once a month. Do not fertilize when it is in bloom.
11. In the spring, cut the plant back and plant it in a sheltered spot in your garden.

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