



## ALL YEAR POINSETTIA CARE

Poinsettias brighten up our homes during the darkest days of winter when our gardens are inaccessible. Because they bring so much color and joy into our lives, it can be hard to let go of them when the holidays are over. Though challenging, you can get your poinsettia to re-bloom the following year. (Side note: poinsettias are NOT poisonous, despite the rumors.)

After the holidays, continue caring for your poinsettia like normal, letting the surface of the soil dry out between waterings. Make sure your poinsettia never sits in water. Keep the plant in a bright, warm room.

In April, cut stems back to about 8 inches (don't worry if there aren't many leaves—more will sprout on the stems). When new growth appears, begin fertilizing once a week (with an all-purpose fertilizer, such as Miracle Grow). Repot as necessary. Move poinsettia outside for the summer months bringing it back in mid-August.

Around mid-July cut stems back, leaving 3-4 leaves on each stem. This will encourage bushier growth.

Sound too easy? Well, here comes the tricky part. ...

Poinsettias are short day plants, meaning they will flower when the day length is less than 12 hours. Beginning October 1st, your poinsettia must receive 14 hours of COMPLETE darkness every day. It's very important to make sure no light gets through during the dark treatments. A couple good ways to attain this type of darkness is inverting a cardboard box (or another opaque container) over the plant or place the plant in a dark closet or cabinet. Any light exposure will delay flowering. Dark treatment must happen from October 1st until Thanksgiving.

If every step has gone as required, you will see the reward! Stop fertilizing at this time and continue care as normal. Enjoy the fruits of all your labor!