

Delaware State University

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION PROGRAM

Holiday Plants

The amaryllis, Christmas cactus and poinsettia are three popular plants that are given or received for the holidays each year. Special attention should be given to each of these plants. Following the guides below may ensure healthy plants during and after the holiday season:

Amaryllis

Amaryllis (*Hippeastrum* genus), a tender bulb plant and native from South Africa, is one of the most colorful houseplants grown. The large funnel-shaped flowers come in a wide range of colors from white to deep scarlet and some in two-color combinations. The six to eight-inch flowers, with six large petals, are born on one to two-foot solid flower stems.

Amaryllis plants grow best in bright indirect light from a south, east, or west window. When they are actively growing or flowering, make sure to keep the soil moist. Keep in mind that over-watering or watering the crown may result in crown rot.

Average indoor humidity is adequate. Ideal daytime temperature for the amaryllis is 65° to 70°.

Fertilize only when the plant is actively growing or flowering with a commercial flowering houseplant fertilizer. Read and follow all label directions.

Christmas Cactus

The Christmas cactus (*Schlumbergera truncata*) is one houseplant that is easy to grow. It is leafless with flat one and a half-inch wide segmented stems. Emerging at Christmas time, flower clusters are about three inches long and may be red, white or pink in color.

Place the plant in indirect sun in a south, east or west window and keep it moist during flowering and while actively growing; but at other times, allow to dry out between watering. Average indoor humidity is fine.

Fertilize with any commercial indoor houseplant fertilizer while the Christmas cactus is actively growing or

flowering. Do not over-fertilize for it may cause damage to the plant's roots.

Poinsettia

The most popular living holiday gift, the poinsettia (*Euphorbia pulcherrima*), was discovered growing wild in Mexico in the 1800's. This flower is one to three-feet tall and has red, white, pink or light green leaves around the small yellow flowers.

Indoors, place your poinsettia in a bright, indirect, south, east or west window.

When watering the poinsettia, keep the soil evenly moist and discard water in a drainage saucer. Over-watering will result in a root rot.

Fertilize the poinsettia all year, but more heavily in the summer months. Read and follow all label recommendations. Ideal growing temperatures are: daytime 65° to 70° and nighttime 50° to 55°.



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