

# Caring For Your Holiday Poinsettia

By Marie Iannotti, About.com Guide

Poinsettias (*Euphorbia pulcherrima*) remain one of the most popular holiday flowers. Hybridizers have expanded the range of colors from the familiar red to pastel yellow and vibrant bi-colors. One of the most common questions after Christmas is "How can I care for my poinsettia so that it will bloom again next Christmas?". While this can be done, it's a very fussy, exacting process and since the plants are not that expensive, you might just choose to start fresh next year. For those of you who are undaunted, the process for saving your poinsettia and getting it to rebloom begins with the care you give it the first season.

## When You First Bring Your Poinsettia Home

**Light** - Place it near a sunny window. South, east or west facing windows are preferable to a north facing window. Poinsettias are tropicals and will appreciate as much direct sunlight as you can provide.

**Heat** - To keep the poinsettia in bloom as long as possible, maintain a temp. of 65 - 75 degrees F. during the day. Dropping the temp. to about 60 degrees F. at night will not hurt the plant. However, cold drafts or allowing the leaves to touch a cold window can injure the leaves and cause premature leaf drop. Have you seen a gangly poinsettia, with only a couple of sad looking leaves hanging on, it was probably exposed to temps that were too cool or extreme shifts in temperature.

**Water** - Water the plant whenever the surface feels dry to the touch. Water until it drains out the bottom, but don't let the plant sit in water. Wilting is another common cause of leaf drop. A wilted plant can be revived and salvaged, but it will take another season to improve its appearance.

**Humidity** - Lack of humidity during dry seasons, in particular winter, is an ongoing houseplant problem. If your home tends to be dry and your poinsettia is in direct light, you will find yourself watering frequently, possibly every day.

*Thank you for supporting the Rotary Club of West Chester's Operation Warm Coats. All Proceeds will go to buying warm coats for needy children in the local area. To Order more poinsettias go to [www.WestChesterRotary.us/poinsettia/](http://www.WestChesterRotary.us/poinsettia/)*