**This news release from K-State Research and Extension is available online at https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/news/stories/2021/11/horticulture-poinsettias.html**

**Note to online editors:** A video to accompany this story is available at https://youtu.be/7OSE7Hp3JBs

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**All About Poinsettias**

K-State horticulture expert shares how to care for these vibrant flowers

*By Taylor Jamison, K-State Research and Extension news writer*

MANHATTAN, Kan. — Kansas State University horticulture expert Ward Upham said it’s important to let the light shine on poinsettias, often a favorite flower for the fall and winter months.

“Place your poinsettias in a sunny window or brightest area of the room,” Upham said, “but don’t let it touch the cold window panes.”

If windows become drafty at night, it is best to remove poinsettias or draw drapes to avoid cold damage.

For the best bloom results, Upham suggests keeping poinsettias at temperatures between 65 degrees Fahrenheit – 75 F during the day, and 60-65 F at night. He said blooms won’t last as long at temperatures higher than 75 F; root rot may occur at temperatures lower than 60 F.

Poinsettias are also quite finicky about soil moisture conditions. Upham recommends checking soil moisture daily by sticking your finger in the soil, about one-half inch deep.

“If it is dry to this depth, the plant needs water,” he said. “When it becomes dry to the touch, water the plant with lukewarm water until some water runs out of the drainage hole, then discard the drainage water.”

Following the temperature and soil moisture guidelines should keep poinsettias in top shape during the holiday season, he said.
Are Poinsettias Poisonous?

A rumor that often surfaces around times when poinsettias are at their prime is that they are poisonous. Although their milky sap may sometimes cause a mild allergic reaction in some people, there has never been a recorded case of poisoning.

“This rumor has been so persistent that members of the Society of American Florists have sought to dispel it by eating poinsettia leaves for the press,” Upham said.

According to the American Medical Association Handbook of Poisonous and Injurious Plants, poinsettias do not contain an irritant or toxin; have not been found to produce an effect orally or topically; and have not caused cases of vomiting.

Although consuming them is not advised, Upham said poinsettias are otherwise completely safe.

Where to Buy Poinsettias

If you do not already have a poinsettia but are interested in purchasing one, the Kansas State University Friends of the Garden hosts an annual poinsettia sale.

The in-person sale will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Nov. 19 at the K-State Gardens’ visitor center, 1500 Denison in Manhattan. More information and prices is available online.

Upham and his colleagues in K-State’s Department of Horticulture and Natural Resources produce a weekly Horticulture Newsletter with tips for maintaining home landscapes. The newsletter is available to view online or can be delivered by email each week.

Interested persons can also send their garden- and yard-related questions to Upham at wupham@ksu.edu, or contact your local K-State Research and Extension office.

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FOR PRINT PUBLICATIONS: Links used in this story:
K-State Gardens plant sale, https://www.k-state.edu/gardens/events/plant-sales.html
K-State Research and Extension statewide offices, https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/about/statewide-locations.html

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