

Nothing says Christmas quite like the poinsettia. The poinsettia plant (*Euphorbia pulcherrima*) has bright petals that contain small flowers of green and yellow at the center. Poinsettias come in a range of colors from white to orange, but are most popular in their red variety.



But the question always arises at my home, and perhaps yours, of what to do with the plant after Christmas. How do I care for it if I decide to keep it? In the event you would like to enjoy your poinsettia plant though out the year. Here are some tips on how to keep your poinsettia beautiful year-round.

January-May: Give your plant plenty of sun and enough water to stay moist, but not soggy. Fertilize every 2 weeks. In early April, prune to 6-8 inches tall.

June: Repot with fresh soil and move your poinsettia outdoors where it can get 6-8 hours of direct sunlight. Fertilize weekly until early fall.

Late July: Pinch off the top of the plant and 2-3 leaves on each stem to prevent the poinsettia from getting leggy.

September: Bring the poinsettia indoors when night-time temperatures fall into the 50s. Place in a sunny window, and water when dry to the touch. Fertilize weekly.

October 1 to Thanksgiving: To force the bracts to color, the plant must be kept in uninterrupted darkness from 5 p.m. to about 8 a.m., and then returned to bright sun for the rest of the day. There should be a 7-10-degree difference between the dark and light environments: optimally, 65-70 degrees at night, and 70-80 degrees in the day. Fertilize weekly.

Thanksgiving: When the bracts begin to color, suspend the dark-light routine, and keep the plant moist and in a sunny spot for 6-8 hours daily. After full color has been achieved (congratulations!), stop fertilizing and move the poinsettia to wherever it will be admired most.

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<https://www.ftd.com/blog/share/poinsettia-care>

