

# Happy Holidays



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## Christmas Poinsettia Need Care

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### Christmas Poinsettia Need Care

*By Annabeth Miller, SMT Editor*

We give and receive them during this special holiday season. But what do you really know about the poinsettia?

There are many things that are true about the poinsettia, says Dexter florist Kim Norman.

- It's a native of Mexico – True
- In nature, poinsettias are perennial flowering shrubs that can grow up to ten feet tall – True
- The showy, colored parts of poinsettia, which most people think are the flowers, are actually colored bracts or modified leaves – True
- The actual flowers, or cyathia, of the poinsettia are in the center of the colorful bracts – True

“There is one common belief, however, that is not true. Despite the urban legend that the poinsettia is toxic, this is absolutely false,” Norman said. Norman and Daryl Ramsey are with Locust Street Flowers in Downtown Dexter.

Norman suggests four main features to watch when bringing poinsettias into the home or workplace.

“Four keys for keeping poinsettias are simple: light, heat, water and humidity,” she said.

**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,” Norman said.

**Heat** - To keep the poinsettia in bloom as long as possible, maintain a temperature of 65 - 75 degrees F. during the day. Dropping the temperature to about 60 degrees F. at night will not hurt the plant. But cold drafts or allowing the leaves to touch a cold window can injure the leaves and cause premature leaf drop.

**Water** - Water the plant whenever the surface feels dry to the touch. Norman said to water the poinsettia 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.

“Poinsettias are beautiful plants, and they really are a favorite during the holiday season. A little bit of ‘tender loving care’ will keep them pretty throughout the holidays,” she said.

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*Photo Above: Kim Norman and Daryl Ramsey of Locust Street Flowers in Downtown Dexter say four things are key to keeping poinsettia plants pretty during the holidays. (SMT Photo by Annabeth Miller)*

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