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### **HOW DO I GET MY POINSETTIA TO REBLOOM ?**

**CUTTING BACK**—The traditionally red leaves of this plant are called bracts, and the flowers are actually their yellow centers. The bracts will usually maintain their color until the beginning of spring. In March, cut off the remaining colored bracts. Prune your poinsettia to about 7 inches to jump-start new growth.

Feed weekly with an all-purpose, water soluble fertilizer and keep your plant moist. After temperatures remain above 55 degrees Fahrenheit each evening, leave the poinsettia outside to soak up warm spring and summer rays.

In June, it will be time to accommodate new growth. Transplant your poinsettia to a bigger container that is no more than four inches larger in diameter than the last one. Water the newly potted plant until water runs out the bottom.

For a bushier plant when the holiday season arrives, prune away all new growth in midsummer so that only two or three bracts remain on each stalk. And to make sure that your plant is getting the same amount of sun and growing evenly on all sides give it a quarter turn once a week.

**Controlling light** – Poinsettias need very specific maintenance at this stage to make sure they rebloom, so follow these steps carefully.

As of October 1, poinsettias need 14 continuous hours of complete darkness each day to turn the bracts bright colors. At 6:00 every evening, store the poinsettia in an area that receives no light at all, such as a closet, cupboard or pantry. Even the light from an outside street lamp could ruin this process, so cover the plant with a large box as well, if necessary. Keep the temperature surrounding the plant between 60 and 70 degrees.

At 8:00 every morning, uncover the poinsettia and move it into sunlight. The bracts need this exposure to bright light and warmth to help them rebloom. (A south, draftless window is a good spot.) At 6 pm, place the plant in complete darkness again.

Continue this cycle until early December, when the bracts have completely expanded and begun to show bright color again. Then remove your poinsettia plant from darkness for the season. Display and care for your plant in indirect sunlight just as you did the year before, and enjoy it once more!