



**From the Winter Potting Shed**  
**Riverview Garden Club**  
**Helpful Hints – December 2024**

Now that our gardens are put to bed for the winter, we turn our attention to indoor gardening. With the Holidays just around the corner, here are some helpful hints to care for the many beautiful holiday flowering plants that may decorate your homes.

**Holiday Flowering Plant Care Tips**



**Poinsettia**

Select plants with colorful bracts covering the top of the plant. Leaves should be uniformly green with no lower leaves missing. Place plants anywhere in your home will tolerate various light levels throughout the holidays. Keep soil moderately moist with a chance to dry out between applications. Water

thoroughly whenever the soil feels dry to the touch and never allow the plant to stand in water for an extended period. Ideal temperatures are room temperature- 60F to 70F. Poinsettia plant parts are not edible and latex sap may cause irritations to the skin when handling poinsettias.

## Christmas Cactus



Prefers medium to bright light and typical room temperatures of 60F to 70F. Let the plant dry out slightly between waterings (soil should be rich and porous).

This tropical, jungle plant needs to be kept from cold windows and drafts. Remove old flowers as they dry up and pass to preserve a fresh appearance. May be grown year 'round and will flower again next fall.

## Re-Blooming of Christmas Cactus

In addition to proper year-round care, there are a few tips and tricks to getting a stubborn Christmas cactus to bloom. Follow these steps starting in the fall and continuing in winter and watching your Christmas cactus gives you a beautiful display of vibrant flowers.

### 1. Reduce Watering

Beginning in October, water your Christmas cactus much less frequently. Less water is all it needs during this time of dormancy. The droughty conditions will signal the plant to begin to form flower buds- become reproductive. When you see buds begin to form, go back to your regular watering schedule.

### 2. Provide the Proper Light and Darkness

As the day lengths get naturally shorter in the fall, Christmas cacti need twelve hours of darkness per day, so set them somewhere that does not get much artificial light after the sun goes down. The short day lengths is another signal for the plant to begin forming flower buds.

### 3. Keep Cool Temperatures

Keep Christmas cacti somewhere cool—around 50-60 degrees F—and away from heat vents, radiators, and fireplaces. Yet another natural signal for the plant to become reproductive by forming new flowers.

#### Amaryllis



Indirect light is best. Excessive heat and bright light cause the blooms to wither prematurely. Water whenever the top 1" of soil is dry-no more than once every 3 days. Water from the bottom or the top of the soil. Ideal temperatures are room temperature- 60F to 70F.

Place a support close to the bulb (do not pierce the bulb) to support the heavy flower stem as it develops.

#### Cyclamen



Cyclamen prefer a cool bright indirect light location in your home. Cool temperatures will help them bloom longer. Cyclamen are sensitive to both over and under watering. Water your cyclamen plant only when the soil is dry to the touch, but do not leave the plant in this dry state so long that it shows visible signs of not being watered, such as droopy leaves and flowers. When you water the plant, water from below the leaves so that the water does not touch the stems or leaves. Only fertilize once every one to two months with water soluble fertilizer mixed at half strength.

### **Lavender & Rosemary Trees**



Lavender and Rosemary plants shaped like a Christmas tree are fun to decorate and display around the holiday season. Provide bright light conditions and keep well-watered. Harvest for cooking or aromatics as you go. Available in 4" or 6" pot sizes.

### **Norfolk Island Pine**



Norfolk Island Pines are a festive houseplant for the holiday season that evokes the look and feel of a Christmas Tree. They are not hardy outdoors. A Norfolk

Pine does best in bright indirect light. Allow the soil to become dry to the touch in between watering's. A nice houseplant all year round.

### **Kalanchoe**



Kalanchoes are available in a variety of colors to be enjoyed in the home to be enjoyed for several weeks. This flowering succulent plant prefers bright indirect light and allow the soil to dry slightly between waterings.

### **General rule of thumb for holiday plant care**

Evenly moist (soil should feel like a squeezed out sponge) do not let plant stand in water, drain drip trays.

Keep plants from drafts, cold windows, and dry heat (room temperature range 60F – 70F is ideal).

Indirect light is light which streams through an east facing window or south/west window facing in the winter.

Fertilizing, (during winter months Nov-Feb) 1 time per month at half the normal rate noted on the

product. (i.e. Normal Rate for granular: 1 Tablespoon per gallon of water – convert to 1-1/2

teaspoons per gallon of water). Plants are in their dormant period and not producing much new growth.

Resource: Creekside Gardens, November 25, 2024