1. National Poinsettia Day is December 12th.
2. Florida has a native poinsettia plant, Euphorbia heterophylla.
3. The Poinsettia plant is poisonous if ingested.
4. The Aztecs used the poinsettia leaves to dye fabric and the sap for medicinal purposes.
5. California is the top producer of Poinsettia’s in the United States.
6. The poinsettia’s main attraction is its red flowers.
7. Poinsettia’s can grow to 12 feet high.

**More Facts and General Care of your Poinsettia Plant**

The genus Euphorbia, to which the Poinsettia Plant belongs to along with 1600 other species, contains a number of common plants. The same genus contains, Gopher Spurge (E. lathyris) which is a biennial that is supposed to repel moles and other critters; Snow-on-the-mountain (E. marginata) which is an annual grown for its foliage and the Crown of Thorns (E. milli) which is a popular houseplant, just to name a few.

The Poinsettia Plant is the best selling and most popular flowering plant during the Holiday Season and there are over 100 different varieties available.

A fresh Poinsettia plant is one on which little or no yellow pollen is showing on the flower clusters in the center of the bracts. Plants that have shed their pollen will soon drop their colorful bracts or leaves.

To prolong the life of a Poinsettia you need to avoid hot or cold drafts. They are highly sensitive to cold temperatures and even a few minutes of exposure will cause the leaf and bract to discolor, wilt and drop.

They need regular watering to keep the soil moist, but not soggy. Drying out will cause premature leaf loss. Give them a bright location but no direct sunlight when they are in bloom. Ideal temperatures are 70-75 degrees F during the day and 60-65 degrees F during the night. If you want to keep them beyond the holiday season as houseplants, they might benefit from being fertilized after about a month or so.
Answers for True/False

1. **True** – National Poinsettia Day, December 12th was designated by Act of Congress to honor the contribution of Dr. Joel Poinsett, an amateur botanist and the first Ambassador to Mexico and who this plant was named after and first introduced the plant into the US in 1828. Dr. Poinsett died on December 12th, 1851.

2. **True** – The native poinsettia in Florida (*Euphorbia heterophylla*) goes by different common names such as: wild poinsettia, painted poinsettia, Mexican fire-plant and fire-on-the-mountain. Some people consider them wildflowers and ornamentals and others deem them weeds. It is a noxious pest for peanut growers in Georgia.

3. **False** – At one time this plant was believed to be poisonous if ingested, but that idea has been tested repeatedly and cleared of this charge by the National Poison Center in Atlanta, Georgia and the American Medical Association. If ingested, this plant can cause stomach irritation and discomfort and those individuals that are sensitive to rubber plant latex should take care when handling this plant. It was found that 40% of those allergic to latex were also allergic to the sticky, milky sap of the poinsettia plant.

4. **True** – From the 14th to the 16th centuries, the Aztecs used the poinsettia leaves to dye fabric for clothing and the sap to help control fevers. They considered the red color a symbol of purity and so poinsettias were traditionally a part of their religious ceremonies.

5. **True** – Although every state in the United States grows poinsettias commercially, California is the top producer followed by Texas, North Carolina, Ohio and Michigan. The Paul Ecke Ranch in Encinitas, California was established in 1923 and continues today. Approximately 80% of all the flowering poinsettias in the USA and 50% of the poinsettias worldwide got their start at the Paul Ecke Ranch.

6. **False** – The poinsettia’s main attraction is its leaves not its flowers. The flowers of the plant are the yellow/green clustered buds in the center. The colored leafy parts are actually bracts or modified leaves. Red is the most popular color that accounts for roughly three quarters of all sales nationwide, followed by white and pink. But many new varieties of colors, speckled, marbled and several colors that are blended together are introduced every year. There are over 100 varieties of the Poinsettia Plant.

7. **True** – In the wild, poinsettia’s can reach heights of 12 feet with leaves measuring six to eight inches across. It is actually considered to be a small tropical tree belonging to the Euphorbia plant family. The Poinsettia (*Euphorbia pulcherrima*) meaning “very beautiful”, is actually a native of southern Mexico and because it blooms in the December timeframe has been used to decorate churches for centuries.