

Poinsettia Hanging Baskets

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Fig. 1. Bobby Hilliard with one of the multi-bloom hanging baskets grown in the horticulture department greenhouses in 1974.

Last year our poinsettia hanging baskets attracted more attention and favorable comments than any plants we have grown in our research program. They were quite easy to grow, but undoubtedly cost more to grow than any other plants we have tried before. We never did come up with a good method of moving these plants to "market", but several growers have described their shipping designs for these popular novelty items.

We tried several varieties. The Hegg varieties particularly were suitable because of their cascading growth habit. Most of the plants were about three feet across, with 20 to 35 blooms (Fig. 1).

We planted 7 rooted cuttings in each 10" hanging basket. Three cuttings were planted erect in each basket, and four cuttings were planted in the 2" holes burned 1 1/2" down from the pot rim. Black plastic was used to keep the medium in the basket (Paul Ecke Poinsettias have illustrated these steps very nicely in their literature). The plants were propagated in late August, and potted and pinched in mid- to late-September. The plants were generally grown under normal day lengths.

Cycocel was applied when the shoots were approximately 2" long. Osmocote was applied as a top dressing after the plants were established. Calcium nitrate and potassium nitrate were applied weekly, as well.

Our plants did not have flowers cascading below the basket, perhaps because of the higher location of the holes on the sides of the baskets. We utilized them more as very attractive centerpieces.

Growers should be careful where they hang these baskets in the greenhouse. They will dry out quite quickly, and plants below them can be affected by the shade and the leachate from the hanging plants.

The keys to successful culture of poinsettia hanging baskets for us in 1974 were:

1. Proper selection of varieties.
2. Three high-quality cuttings on top, four on the sides.
3. Well-drained medium (3 bark:1 sand) with adequate water and slow-release fertilizer.
4. Cuttings potted in baskets and pinched in mid- to late-September.
5. Night temperatures of 65° to November 15, then reduced to 62°.
6. Cycocel applied when shoots were about 2 inches long.

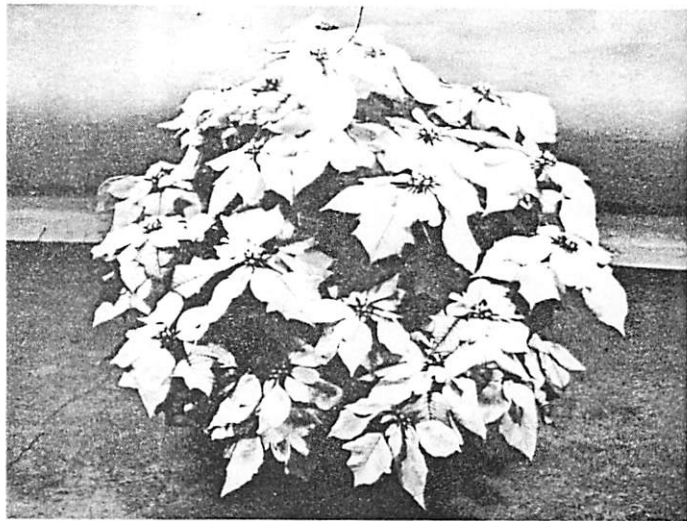


Fig. 2. Combination of Annette Hegg White and Annette Hegg Marble. Propagated August 26, potted and pinched September 25. Plants were over 36" across with 38 blooms.