

II. Cultural Considerations to keep Diseases of Poinsettia to a Minimum by Dr. Norman W. Butterfield

1. Maintain 65° F. degree night temperature.
2. Take cuttings out of sand as soon as signs of rooting begin. There will be less wilting and shorter plants resulting.
3. Give the cuttings all the light they will take at the different stages. This includes the rooting phase, too.
4. Space the plants out well in propagation bench; as well as when the plants are in 2 1/4" pots.
5. Propagate late for small short plants. If cuttings are handled properly, they may be taken as late as October 6. The stock plants should have been lighted from September 15 on. Cuttings shaded with black cloth 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 a.m. while rooting. Temperature maintained at 70° F. to obtain maximum bract size and quality bloom.
6. Sterilize soil, pots, benches and any other areas with which the Poinsettia plants may come in contact.
7. Clean up all insects, white fly especially, before bracts show color. Materials to use:-  
  
Malathion 25% w.p. - 2 lbs. per 100 gallons  
Thiodan 25% w.p. - 1 lb. per 100 gallons  
Dithio smoke - safest to use if color is showing on bracts.  
Conditions must be right if using smoke after bracts show color.
8. Feed adequately to maintain good color - test soil frequently. Plants take high K to N ratio 20-0-30 or 16-8-24 as suggested ratios. Soluble salts should be low; 60 is preferable.
9. For the ultimate in quality, try lighting a few poinsettias until October 6. The light requirement is 1-60 watt bulb 4' apart and 2 feet above the plants, or 1-75 watt bulb 6 feet apart and 2 feet above the plants. For best results, apply lighting program for 1-2 hours during the middle of the night (11:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m.).