

New poinsettia cultivars for 1989

Mark P. Bridgen

Assistant Professor of Floriculture

The three major poinsettia breeders in the United States have introduced eight new poinsettia cultivars for 1989. Paul Ecke's ranch of Encinitas, California has three new sports from Gutbier V-17 Angelika: 'Marble' ('Angelika Marble'), 'Regina' ('Angelika Pink'), and 'Dorothee' ('Angelika White'). They are all 9 1/2 week varieties which are best grown as pinched plants similar to the V-14s. They are very vigorous growers and, therefore, need strong feedings and additional growth regulator applications. These three cultivars are particularly susceptible to Botrytis; therefore, increase air circulation around the plants and avoid splashing water.

Ecke has also introduced three other new colors for 1989. 'Lemon Drop' is a novel lemon yellow color with dark green leaves. It is an 8 1/2-week variety which is such a short grower that no growth regulators need to be applied. 'Lemon Drop' is excellent as a pinched plant in 3", 4" or 5" pots. 'Eckespoint Pink Peppermint' is a nine-week variety with speckled pink bracts. This plant also has excellent branching and needs to be finished-off cool or the bracts will get big and floppy. 'Gutbier V-14 Marble' has light pink swirls on creamy-white bracts. This plant is the latest addition to the Gutbier V-14 group and should be grown as other V-14s.

Ball Seed Co. of West Chicago, Illinois has introduced a new seedling-bred poinsettia called 'Cheers.' It is a nine-week variety which has bright red bracts with dark green foliage. 'Cheers' branches very well and should be grown as a pinched plant. It produces strong upright branches that resist breaking during sleeving and shipping. This plant should be finished cool.

Mikkelsens of Ashtabula, Ohio has added 'Yuletide' to its collection of deep red poinsettias. This is a plant which is best for the warmer areas as it does not require cool temperatures (60°F or less) to develop red bracts. The bloom on this plant has many more bracts than 'Glory,' 'Annette Hegg' and 'Improved Rochford' and continues to develop new bracts as the plant ages. 'Yuletide' responds best to a semi-soft pinch and, once the bracts form, the cyathia will remain tight and not grow apart.

Trying a few new cultivars each year is a good way of evaluating new plant material under your own growing conditions.