

PACKAGING POINSETTIAS

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Each year the question arises, "How shall I ship my poinsettias to the consumer to arrive in prime condition?"

Poinsettia growers usually sleeve the plants before they are shipped to the retailer. The plants are packaged in a brown paper sleeve for a short time, sometimes overnight, and very seldom is there a problem of wilting.

The retailer, on the other hand, may keep plants in a closed paper sleeve for a day or so until delivery. The problem is usually not the sleeve. The bent leaf petioles on mature poinsettia may emit enough ethylene in a closed package to cause the plant to look droopy. This is not true wilting--it is an epinastic response to ethylene.

Avoid this by keeping sleeves open at the top except while shipping. This will vent the gas. Keeping plants at lower temperatures (50° suggested) will also reduce the ethylene levels. The plant will then remain fresh looking until the customer receives it. A plant packaged over three days may look wilted. However, when exposed to room temperature, it should recover.