

## POINSETTIAS ARE *NOT* POISONOUS

*Jay S. Koths*  
*Extension Floriculturist*

The poinsettia was found guilty without a trial. Old wives' tales--hearsay evidences--ignorance--plea bargaining--gave it a reputation of being poisonous.

Until recently, the symbol of Christmas was found in many lists of poisonous plants. But none of the references could be substantiated. Even the most serious citation was found to be based on hearsay evidence.

At last the poinsettia has been given a fair trial and found not guilty. Two researchers at Ohio State University fed poinsettias to rats. They prepared homogenates of leaves (upper and lower), red bracts and even the small yellow flowers. This homogenate was force fed to the rats through a feeding tube since poinsettias taste terrible.

This diet was not just a taste to see what would happen. The rats were fed from one to five percent of their body weight. This is equivalent to a 140 lb. person choking down 7 lbs. of poinsettia. Most people couldn't eat half that much steak.

Nothing detrimental occurred. There were no signs of toxicity or apparent ill effects. All 160 rats were healthy.

The researchers went on to analyze the leaves, bracts, stem and even the latex in the milky sap. They found no chemicals commonly considered

toxic. This research was published by Robert P. Stone and W. J. Collins in *Toxicon* 9:301-302 (1971). These gentlemen have conducted a fair trial for the poinsettia, at last, and found it not guilty.

The poinsettia is not completely lily white. A large proportion of human beings are allergic to something. A few people are sensitive to the milky sap of the poinsettia. This is a skin irritation. While less severe and far less common than poison ivy, it is similar in that no reaction occurs when eaten. The rash is principally a nuisance.

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Liquid Measure Equivalents

	Gal.	Qt.	Pint	Cup	Oz.	Tbsp.	Tsp.	ml.
Tsp.	768	192	96	48	6	3	1	4.9
Tbsp.	256	64	32	16	2	1		14.8
Oz.	128	32	16	8	1			29.6
Cup	16	4	2	1				236.6
Pint	8	2	1					473
Qt.	4	1						946
Gal.	1							3785

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