

POINSETTIAS - SUGGESTIONS FOR PRODUCTION OF BETTER CUTTINGS FOR YOUR  
POINSETTIA CROP

1. Feeding the Stock Plants - Most soils for growing this crop need a high ratio of potassium to nitrogen. We have found that for most situations that potassium nitrate having an analysis of 14-0-45 works out very well. The superphosphate added at the time of planting should be sufficient to carry the crop through its normal production period. A 20-0-30 or similar formulation sold as (XL-50) is also very good.

We suggest for those who are having trouble maintaining an adequate nutrient program that they test their soil frequently. Growers who have adequate experience with their soils may not need to test their soil.

2. Pinching and Taking the Stock Plants - It is recommended that to build up the structure of the stock plant that the stems be pinched when they are 3 - 10" long by taking off about 1/2" of the tip. This pinching process should be continued until time for taking cuttings.

It is recommended that cuttings taken in July and early August should be cut to leave one leaf per stem.

Cuttings taken in late August and September should be cut to two leaves per stem. There may be need for recutting of the stem to obtain proper length of stem for sticking in the sand.

3. Treatment of Stems for Control of Disease and to Increase Rooting - Rooting powders may be mixed with ferbam at the rate of 3 parts rooting powder and 1 part ferbam. We suggest that the base of the cuttings be dusted using a puffer duster. We recommend that you do not wet the base of the stems and then "dunk" them into the powder. The dunking might spread diseases.

Spacing Cuttings and Bottom Heat - For best rooting, stick the cutting  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " deep and space adequately in the row as well as between the rows to prevent too much overlapping of the leaves. Use polyethylene bags to keep the cuttings in while harvesting them from the stock plants.

Keep bottom heat  $65^{\circ}\text{F}$  minimum and not over  $70^{\circ}\text{F}$ .

Misting - This type of system is gaining favor for growers of poinsettia cuttings. Some of the advantages are:-

1. Full sun can be used with no shading.
2. Cuttings root faster and cuttings wilt less when potted up into peat pots or  $2\frac{1}{4}$ " pots.

It is essential to have proper spacing of mist nozzles; drafts should be cut down to a minimum so that even distribution of mist can be maintained.

Above all there must be good drainage and bottom heat must be maintained at  $65^{\circ}\text{F}$  or little above. Evaporation of mist cools plants and sand.