

# Points to Ponder on Finishing Your Poinsettia Crop

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**1** **Marginal leaf and bract necrosis**—distorted, puckered leaves and bracts with dead edges are symptoms of Calcium deficiency. Some cultivars (V-14 Glory) are especially susceptible to this problem.

Weekly sprays with Calcium Chloride (Ca Cl<sub>2</sub>) at 400 ppm, reduced leaf distortion and bract necrosis.

High ammonical nitrogen or fertilizer levels during the last three to five weeks of production contributes to bract necrosis. Sample and test soil at The University of Connecticut Soils Lab. Decrease feed rates if fertilizer levels are high, using a 15-0-15 or a poinsettia finisher.

Formulation of pesticides used in thermal foggers will cause spotting of bracts. Do not use thermal foggers once bract coloration begins.

**2** **Slow Bract Development**—Canadian researchers report that warm nights/cool days delay bract sizing and coloring. In early November, the temperature regimes should either be equal day/night temperatures, i.e. zero DIF (68°F), or slightly warmer day than night temperatures, i.e. slightly positive DIF (70°F/68°F).

**3** **Cyathia Drop**—determined by researchers at Michigan State University to be favored by low light in combination with warm night temperatures. Maintaining proper night temperature in October and early November, plus lower night temperatures in late November, and spacing plants to allow maximum light penetration, will reduce this problem.

**4** **Latex Eruption**, also known as 'Crud'—results in latex exudation (burst cells) near the flower head (Cyathia) during November and early December. Prevent this by avoiding low temperature, high humidity and high soil moisture. Proper temperature and nutritional maintenance will also reduce this problem.

## 5

"Rabbit Tracks"—a disorder caused by the breakdown of bract tissue along each side of the midrib of the bract between the axillary veins. This usually occurs in late November and early December during the late stages of bract development.

The exact cause of this problem is not known at the present time. It is believed to be favored by too much fertilizer late in development and warm night temperatures (over 65°F) near the end of the crop.

### References

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