

Potted Plants and Bulbs

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Q. How can very large poinsettias be retarded--that is, kept from becoming quite so large?

A. (From a Grower) About 2/3 of my plants were retarded by using light starting at 10:00 p.m. until 2:00 a. m. each night from September 20 until October 5. The plants were held at a 62° F minimum temperature. Plants which were not lighted were kept at 50-55° F. The retarded plants showed color December 7 and shipped in perfect condition.

A. (From a Grower) I retarded my poinsettias by using heat of 68-70° nights from September 25 to October 15. The plants, of course, were propagated and pinched later.

A. (Southern Grower) I started using higher temperature September 20 this year. I found fewer bracts and a poorer color. I intend to do the same thing next year only starting September 15 to prevent loss of bracts.

Q. Is there any spray material that can be used to eliminate poinsettia root rot?

A. Thielaviopsis is eliminated from the benches by applications of Parzate but Pythium not controlled. Suggest steam sterilization where possible or drench the benches with formaldehyde if you can empty the house.

Q. Dr. Feder: I am looking for clues on a new poinsettia disease. It appears to have similar symptoms to the 2-4, D application--that is, the plants are stunted and dwarfed during August. The leaves may have a mosaic or mottled appearance. If you find such a disease, let me know.

Q. How can I control cyclamen mite?

A. Four applications of Systox using 1/2 pint of the 21% emulsifiable in a convenient amount of water per 1000 square feet of bench at 10-day intervals. This should be applied when the plants are young as it is not effective on mature plants. Two additional applications approximately two months before sale have been considered helpful by some growers.

Q. What's new for insect control on pot plants?

A. On the West Coast the pot plant growers have been using Malathion as a spray or aerosol. It has the advantages of being non-toxic and does control mites, aphids, thrips, mealy bugs, and many scale insects. Suggest the application of 4 pounds of the 25% wettable powder per 100 gallons of water or 1 1/2 pints of 50% emulsifiable solution for 100 gallons, or 1 pound of 15% aerosol for 50,000 cubic feet.

Q. There is a great deal of variation in the stem length of my lilies although they were planted at the same time. Why?

A. This was very possibly due to the use of sprouted bulbs or those from which the sprouts had been pulled. The conditions that cause sprouting will also cause the unevenness in growth. This occurred prior to their greenhouse forcing.

Q. I had excessive defoliation of azaleas. Are there any particular reasons for this?

A. The reasons are probably high light intensity and a low temperature. Be sure to store or hold your azaleas in a well-shaded greenhouse at 40-45° F. This will give you good bloom and the minimum amount of defoliation although it is impossible to completely avoid it.