

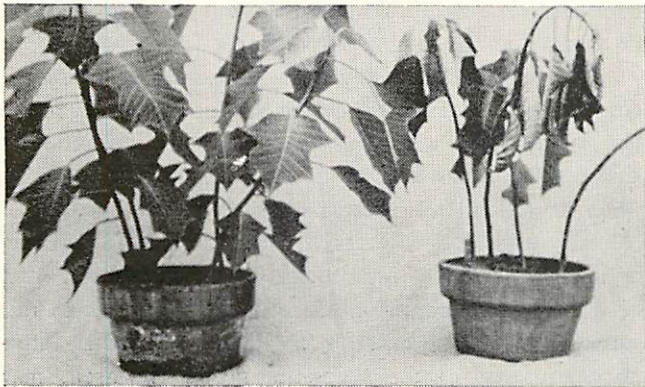
Disease of the Month:

## Pythium Root and Stem Rot of Poinsettia

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*Pythium* is one of the "big three" root and stem rotting fungi which seriously affect poinsettia production. It may cause losses at any time during the season, but more severe losses usually occur late in the season. Fungi of this type (the "water molds") generally are damaging



Left, normal plant; right, infected plant.

to plants *only when the soil is very wet*. *Pythium* destroys the root system resulting in wilting and leaf chlorosis. Eventually, stem lesions may extend several inches above the soil line, causing leaf drop and stunting. The best method of controlling the disease is to prevent its occurrence with adequate soil sterilization, strict sanitation, and *careful control of watering*. Chemical soil drenches can not usually be relied on late in the season.