

POINSETTIA TREE PRODUCTION



Poinsettia trees offer growers an opportunity to produce a unique form for the upscale florist market. Producing high quality trees requires a commitment to an extended growing season, considerable greenhouse space, and diligent pruning and crop maintenance. Some poinsettia cultivars are better adapted to this form than others, with strong stems and large bracts being desirable characteristics for trees.

The height of the poinsettia tree is directly dependent upon growing time prior to the first pinch. Trees can be double- or triple-pinched to attain the final shape and size desired for the finished plant. Double-pinched trees create an "umbrella" shape, while the triple-pinched trees have a more rounded "lollipop" form. The following guidelines can assist growers in producing exceptional poinsettia trees.

RECOMMENDED CULTIVARS	CULTIVAR CODE	BREEDER	RESPONSE TIME (WEEKS)	VIGOR	MINI TREE	TREE
Advent Red	11008	Ecke	6.5	●●●●○	✓	✓
Premier Jingle Bells	11086	Ecke	7	●○○○○	✓	
Ferrara	10897	Red Fox	7.5	●●●●○	✓	✓
Prestige Early Red	11151	Ecke	7.5	●●●●○	✓	✓
Tikal	11203	Ecke	7.5	●●●●●		✓
Freedom (Red 2015, White, Pink)	11020, 11022, 11024	Ecke	7.5-8	●●●●○	✓	
Winter Rose (Early Red, Dark Red, White)	10993, 11162, 11163	Ecke	7.5-8.5	●○○○○	✓	
Infinity (Polar, Red)	10293, 10291	Red Fox	8	●●●●○	✓	✓
Viking (Red, Cinnamon)	10650, 10657	Red Fox	8	●●●●○	✓	✓
Maximax	10620	Red Fox	8	●●●●○	✓	✓
Burning Ember	10909	Red Fox	8	●●●●○	✓	✓
Prima Bella	10911	Red Fox	8	●●●●○	✓	✓
Advantage Red	11324	Ecke	8	●●●●○	✓	✓
Jubilee (Jingle Bells, Pink, Red, White)	11036, 11035, 11030, 11033	Ecke	8	●●●●○	✓	✓
Peterstar (Marble, Pink, Red, White)	11079, 11075, 11070, 11073	Ecke	8	●●●●○		✓
Ice Punch	11216	Ecke	8	●●●●○	✓	✓
Sparkling Punch	11213	Ecke	8	●●●●○	✓	✓
Majestic Pink	11345	Ecke	8	●●●●○	✓	✓
Snowcap	11212	Ecke	8	●●●●●		✓
Winter Blush	11223	Ecke	8	●●●●○		✓
Enduring (Marble, Pink, Red, White)	11019, 11015, 11010, 11013	Ecke	8	●●○○○	✓	
Autumn Leaves	11391	Ecke	8	●○○○○	✓	
Gold Rush	11401	Ecke	8	●●○○○	✓	
Prestige Red	11150	Ecke	8	●●●●○	✓	✓
Grande Italia	10330	Red Fox	8.5	●●●●○	✓	✓
Southern Belle	10908	Red Fox	8.5	●●●●○	✓	✓
Euroglory	10220	Red Fox	8.5	●●●●○	✓	✓
Protégé Dark Red	10661	Red Fox	8.5	●●●●○	✓	✓
Prestige Maroon	11156	Ecke	8.5	●●●●○	✓	✓
Classic (Pink, Red, White)	11185, 11180, 11183	Ecke	8.5	●●●●●		✓
Solstice	11105	Ecke	8.5	●●●●○	✓	✓
Polly's Pink	11209	Ecke	8.5	●●●●○	✓	✓
Red Glitter	11317	Ecke	8.5	●●●●○	✓	✓
Green Envy	11400	Ecke	8.5	●●●●○	✓	✓
Tapestry	11107	Ecke	8.5	●○○○○	✓	
Orange Spice	11206	Ecke	8.5	●○○○○	✓	
Jingle Bell Rock	11225	Ecke	9	●●●●○	✓	✓

●○○○○ Compact ●●○○○ Medium-compact ●●●○○ Medium ●●●●○ Medium-vigorous ●●●●● Vigorous

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1. PLANTING

Plant rooted cuttings into 15 cm container. Establish these plants in a warm, humid environment to help develop an active root system and vigorous growth. Begin long days (10pm– 2am) at the time of transplant to keep plants vegetative and minimize the potential for premature floral initiation. Stake plants at this time to prevent crooked stems, leaving at least 3 cm between the stem and the stake. As plants elongate, lightly tie them to the stakes, using floral tape or similar materials that will not girdle or damage the stem. Always maintain a margin of space between the plants and avoid crowding the crop. Space several times during the growth cycle to provide good light and adequate air movement for the development of symmetrical trees.



Ferrara

2. TRANSPLANTING

Do not let the plant become pot bound. Transplant trees into the final growing container (20-25 cm container for small plant trees, 30 cm container for larger trees). For taller trees (1.2-1.5m, rooted cuttings are transplanted in late May to early June. For mini trees (45 cm), transplant rooted cuttings in late June. Produce trees under full sunlight but avoid excessively high light that may cause heat stress or restrict stem elongation.

3. SHOOT AND LEAF REMOVAL

As the plant develops, remove the lower side shoots when they are approximately 5 cm long. When removing the lower shoots, be sure to leave a minimum of 10 shoots on the top of the plants to form the canopy branches. Do not remove the lower foliage until September or October, unless it is necessary due to insects, diseases, or chemical burn (phytotoxicity). To remove damaged leaves from the tree, cut the petiole about 13 mm from the main stem. The remaining petiole will dry up and abscise naturally without causing injury to the stem.

4. FIRST PINCH

The first pinch should be a soft pinch, removing 6-13mm of the terminal growth. Remove the immature top 2 to 3 leaves to encourage strong branching in the remaining nodes. If the plant has split, pinch immediately below this split to induce new, vegetative growth. Plant growth regulator may be applied to prevent stretch on side shoots.

5. SECOND PINCH

The second pinch should be approximately 4 weeks after the first. If this is a double pinched tree, the lower shoots should be pinched to leave 3 to 4 nodes per stem, while the upper shoots should be pinched harder, leaving 2 to 3 nodes. If this is a triple-pinched tree, all shoots (upper and lower) should be pinched to leave 2 or 3 nodes each. At this time, increase the light intensities to about 5000 f.c. (54 klux) and use growth regulators as required to prevent stretch of the new growth.

For triple-pinched trees, the final pinch should take place about 4 weeks after the second pinch, and 2 to 3 weeks prior to floral induction. Trim each shoot to 2 to 3 leaf nodes. Remove any older foliage that may be shading the growth and development of

Shape the plant canopy during the final pinch to create a compact, symmetrical form. The number of flowering shoots will depend on the look that is desired. Typically, growers leave 3 to 10 flowering shoots. Before sale, remove any leaves that distract from the tree shape and form.

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6. PLANT SUPPORTS

Support the branches by loosely tying them to the support stake next to the main stem. This should be done near the time of the final pinch to avoid breakage of new shoots and stems.

7. FERTILIZER

Fertilizer requirements for trees will vary with the growing season. During the hot summer growing period, use fertilizer with high (20-40%) ammonium nitrate and additional calcium, phosphorus, and magnesium. Once into fall growing conditions, a finisher-type feed (higher in nitrate nitrogen) is more appropriate. Avoid buildup of soluble salts in the media, and monitor the

8. PACKING AND SHIPPING

Packing and shipping trees can be difficult due to their large size and potential for breakage. If trees are going to be trucked any distance, it is advisable to sleeve and box them individually. If trees are going to be delivered within a more local market, consider securing the pots in some type of larger container to prevent the tree from falling over, and sleeve the upper canopy with a large flared sleeve or plastic bag. Do not crowd the plants in transport to avoid damage to bracts and stems.

Poinsettia trees can be a challenge to grow, but these unique forms offer expanded



Infinity Polar

9. VALUE ADDED IDEAS

To further increase the value of trees, consider several enhancement options.

- Upgrade containers to increase interest and value of the finished product.
 - Clay pots should include the saucer.
 - Terra-cotta pots with design, relief details, or other decorative features increase interest and value.
- Cover the soil to add drama to the look of these trees.
 - Use moss, clean pea-gravel, excelsior packing, etc. as a soil cover.
 - Use variegated ivy, flowering *Bacopa*, or other trailing plants to create a “conservatory” look to these trees.

SUGGESTED PRODUCTION SCHEDULE

	TRIPLE PINCH (4-5' tree)	DOUBLE PINCH (4-5' tree)	DOUBLE PINCH (3-4' tree)
TRANSPLANT (RC)	April 15	May 1	June 1
1st PINCH	Late-July	Mid-August	Mid-August
2nd PINCH	Mid-August	September 5-10	September 5-10
3rd PINCH	September 5-10	—	—