

GARDEN TIPS FOR DECEMBER!

David Hillock, Senior Extension Specialist

Lawn & Turf

- Remove leaves from cool-season grasses or mow with a mulching mower.
- Continue mowing cool-season lawns.
- Continue to control broadleaf weeds in well-established warm- or cool-season lawns with a post-emergent broadleaf weed killer.

Tree & Shrubs

- Select a freshly cut Christmas tree. Make a new cut prior to placing in tree stand. Add water daily.
- Live Christmas trees are a wise investment, as they become permanent additions to the landscape after the holidays.
- Light prunings of evergreens can be used for holiday decorations. Be careful with sap that can mar surfaces.

Flowers

- Apply winter mulch to protect rose bush bud unions and other perennials. Wait until after several early freezes or you will give insects a good place to winter.
- Poinsettias must have at least six hours of bright, indirect light daily. Keep plants away from drafts.
- Watch for and control pests on indoor houseplants.
- Make sure indoor plants are receiving enough light or set up a fluorescent plant light.

Fruits & Nuts

- Cover strawberry plants with a 3-4" mulch.
- Wait to prune fruit trees until late Feb. or March.

General

- Keep all plants watered during dry conditions even though some may be dormant. Irrigate all plantings at least 24 hours before hard-freezing weather if soil is dry.
- Clean and fill bird feeders.
- Till garden plots without a cover crop to further expose garden pests to harsh winter conditions.
- Visit your county extension office to obtain gardening fact sheets.
- Review your garden records so you can correct past mistakes. Purchase a new gardening journal or calendar to keep the New Year's gardening records.

Retirement Reception

for

Darrell McBee

Thursday, January 4, 2023

1:00-3:00pm

Harper County Fairgrounds



Please join us for a come and go reception honoring Darrell's 16 years serving as an OSU Agriculture County Extension Educator



Poinsettia Care

David Hillock

Newer cultivars of poinsettia, in addition to being very showy, have excellent keeping quality and stronger stems than older cultivars. When buying your poinsettia, choose a plant with well-expanded, well-colored bracts. Foliage should be medium to dark green with uniform coloring. Flowers should be present in the center of the bracts.



After you purchase your plant, do not expose it to chilling temperatures or cold drafts of air. If the temperature outdoors is below 50°F do not carry an unwrapped plant from the retail shop to your car. In the home or other place of display, avoid cold drafts and excessive heat from heating ducts, TV sets or large incandescent lamps. Temperatures of 70°F or below (down to 55°F) are desirable to retain best bract color. Large plants can be placed on the floor if light is adequate.

Light plays an important role in retention of leaves on the plant. Place the plant in an area where it receives at least six to eight hours of direct natural or artificial light. A minimum of 75 foot candles is desirable where possible. This would be like the minimum light intensity required for good desk lighting in an office. Incandescent lights such as those found in most homes will give a truer, brighter bract color than most types of fluorescent light.

Poinsettias can be displayed with other houseplants. The adjacent plants raise the humidity and allow poinsettias to last longer. Also, the regular houseplants can be spruced up for the holidays.

Many commercial growers use non-soil mixes of sphagnum peat, pine bark, vermiculite, perlite or similar ingredients. When plants are grown in such non-soil mixes, it is sometimes difficult to decide when the plant needs water. If there is no heavy component (sand or soil) in the mix and a plastic pot is used, the pot can be lifted to determine its weight. If the plant is heavy, there is usually plenty of moisture in the pot; if it is lightweight, the medium is dry, and a thorough watering should be given. Moisture needs can also be assessed by feeling the growing medium in the pot. Water when the top of the growing medium is starting to feel dry, but do not allow too much drying. Slight wilting of the plant is not harmful, but avoid severe wilting, which will cause leaves to drop.

Water the plant thoroughly. Make sure a small amount of water drips through the drainage holes of the container. If the plant is wrapped with decorative foil, punch a hole in the foil beneath the pot to allow excess water to escape. The plant should be placed on a saucer to prevent damage to the furniture or carpet.

Do not water the plant too frequently when the soil or growing mix is already wet or this may result in roots suffocating from lack of oxygen, causing the leaves to wilt, yellow, and drop.

Recent research has shown that poinsettias are not poisonous, but the plants are intended solely for ornamental purposes. Some people are allergic to the milky sap and may develop a rash when exposed to the sap. Avoid breaking the leaves and stems, as this will release the sap. It is wise to keep any houseplant out of the reach of small children and pets.