

SAVING YOUR CHRISTMAS PLANTS

Amaryllis in a Flowerpot

- Each amaryllis stalk typically produces 3-4 large beautiful blooms that open sequentially. Cut off individual flowers as they fade. Once all blooms on a stalk have finished, cut the entire stalk down to 2 inches above the bulb, but leave the leaves intact. These leaves are essential for photosynthesis, which feeds the bulb for future blooms.
- Some varieties send up multiple stalks, extending the bloom period significantly.
- Temperature preferences matter: Amaryllis prefer 68-75°F during active growth. Cooler temperatures slow development while excessive heat can cause bud blast.
- Summer Vacation: In spring or summer, you can move your amaryllis outdoors to a sunny spot (after the risk of frost is gone). Keep watering and fertilizing every few weeks to help the bulb recharge.
- Let the leaves die back naturally.
- Reblooming Prep: In late summer or early fall, bring the bulb back indoors and let it rest in a cool, dark place for 8–10 weeks. Stop watering during this dormancy period. After the rest, repot the bulb, start watering, and wait for new growth to signal it's gearing up to bloom again.
- Choose a pot only 1-2 inches wider than the bulb diameter. Plant the bulb with the top third exposed above the soil line. Use *well-draining potting mix*, never garden soil. Place the newly planted bulb in a warm location with bright, indirect light. South-facing windowsills work perfectly.
- Water sparingly until you see green growth emerging from the bulb top. Once the flower stalk appears, increase watering frequency but never let the bulb sit in water. The stalk grows incredibly fast, sometimes shooting up several inches per day. Rotate the pot every few days to prevent the heavy bloom from causing the stalk to lean.
- Feed throughout the growing phase: Once the stalk emerges, fertilize every two weeks with a balanced liquid fertilizer. This strengthens the bulb for future bloom cycles.
- Support becomes necessary as blooms develop. The flowers are surprisingly heavy and can topple the entire pot. Insert a *bamboo stake* next to the stalk when it reaches 8-10 inches tall, securing it loosely with *soft ties*. Position the stake carefully to avoid piercing the bulb.



Amaryllis in Wax Coating

Deadhead the Flowers

Once the flowers start to wilt, cut each spent bloom individually using sharp, sterile pruners. Keep the flower stalk intact until all blooms on that stalk have faded. Afterward, cut the stalk about an inch above the bulb to conserve energy for future growth



Preserve the Leaves

Do not remove the green leaves, as they continue to photosynthesize and provide energy to the bulb.

Remove the Wax

Carefully remove the wax coating using a sharp knife or box cutter. If the bulb has a metal wire or cellophane layer inside the wax, remove these as well. Take care not to damage the bulb while peeling off the wax

Let the leaves die back naturally

Plant or Store the Bulb

Once the wax is removed, you can either plant the bulb in well-draining soil or store it for future use. Make sure the bulb has roots-some wax bulbs are sold without, and you will need to be potted to produce roots

If planting, let the bulb air-dry for a few days to allow any minor wounds to heal. Place it in a bright, indirect light location and water sparingly until new growth appears

Encourage Future Blooming

After planting, the bulb will enter a growth phase, producing leaves and eventually flower stalks. With proper care, including adequate light and occasional fertilization, the bulb can rebloom in the following season

CHRISTMAS CACTUS CARE

- Christmas cacti are Brazilian rainforest natives, not desert dwellers. This fundamental difference explains why they need completely opposite care from typical cacti. These long-lived plants can bloom reliably for decades with proper treatment.
- Post-Holiday Care: Keep your Christmas cactus in a spot with bright, indirect light and water it when the top inch of soil feels dry. These plants enjoy a bit more humidity, so placing them near a humidifier or on a pebble tray will keep them happy!
- Year-Round Maintenance: After the blooms fade, trim back any leggy growth to keep the plant tidy. Feed it monthly during the growing season (spring through summer) with a cactus fertilizer or diluted houseplant food.
- Reblooming Tips: To trigger new buds, Christmas cacti need cooler temperatures (50–55°F) and 12–14 hours of darkness each night for about 6 weeks in the fall. Once you see buds forming, move it back to its usual spot and resume regular care.



Season	Plant Activity	Care Focus
Spring to Summer	Active growth	Regular watering, monthly feeding, bright indirect light
Early Fall	Bud formation	Cooler temps (50-55°F), 12-14 hours darkness, reduced water
Late Fall to Winter	Blooming period	Consistent moisture, stable environment, no moving
Post-Bloom	Rest period	Reduced watering, light pruning, no fertilizer

Poinsettia



- Poinsettias are the most iconic Christmas plants, but they are also the most misunderstood. These tropical natives need specific conditions that differ dramatically from typical houseplants.
- Light exposure makes or breaks poinsettia health. These plants crave bright, indirect sunlight for at least six hours daily. Place them near south or west-facing windows but avoid direct afternoon sun that can scorch the colorful bracts. Insufficient light causes the signature red, pink, or white bracts to fade and drop prematurely.
- Poinsettias are incredibly temperature-sensitive. The ideal range sits between 65-70°F during the day and slightly cooler during night temperatures. Keep them away from drafty windows, heating vents, and exterior
- Monitor for pests weekly: Whiteflies and spider mites love poinsettias. It's important to watch closely for signs of insects. Inspect the undersides of leaves every week and treat infestations immediately with *insecticidal soap* to prevent spread.
- Poinsettias are famous for their bold, colorful bracts (often mistaken for flowers), Bracts are commonly known as false flowers. Especially in the case of floral bracts, they are much more striking and showy, so it's normal for them to be confused with flower petals. In reality these are modified leaves, and the flowers are the small white inflorescences in the center.

Care Element	Requirement	Frequency
Light	Bright, indirect sunlight	6+ hours daily
Watering	When top inch of soil is dry	Every 2-3 days typically
Temperature	65-70°F	Constant
Fertilizing	Half-strength balanced formula	Every 2 weeks during bloom
Humidity	Average household levels	Mist occasionally if dry

Poinsettia

- They don’t have to be a one-season wonder. Here’s how to keep them going:
- **After the Holidays**: Place your poinsettia in a bright, sunny spot away from drafts, heating vents, or cold windows. Water it when the top inch of soil feels dry, but don’t let it sit in water—good drainage is key.
- **As Spring Approaches**: Around March or April, cut back the stems to about 4–6 inches. Don’t panic—it’ll grow back fuller! Keep watering and fertilize once a month with an all-purpose houseplant fertilizer.
- **Reblooming Challenge**: Want it to turn red again? Starting in September, give your poinsettia 14–16 hours of complete darkness each day (a dark closet works well) and bright light during the day. Do this for about 8 weeks, and voilà—holiday colors return!

