



—

# SIMPLY RED

WE CAN'T GET ENOUGH  
OF POINSETTIAS—REAL, FAUX,  
OR CRAFTED. EXPLORE  
THE BEAUTY OF THE TROPICAL  
PLANT THAT WARMS  
OUR COLDEST MONTHS.



BY KATY KIICK CONDON PRODUCED BY JESSICA THOMAS  
PHOTOS ADAM ALBRIGHT CRAFTING BY KIM HUTCHISON



## HIGH IMPACT

Poinsettia bracts (the technical name for the colorful leaves) are showstoppers when cut for arrangements. Display them in little glasses, but first dab away the sap and burn the ends with a lighter; this keeps the water clear and makes bracts last longer (about two or three days). For an easy centerpiece that stays lush all season, group small poinsettias in their pots in a low bowl.



THESE FLUFFY BLOOMS ARE MADE FROM PAPER NAPKINS. HOW-TO ON PAGE 136.

MAKE VASES SPARKLY ON THE CHEAP: BRUSH GLUE ONTO A VOTIVE HOLDER AND SPRINKLE WITH GLITTER.





## RED IS JUST THE BEGINNING

Crimson may say Christmas, but a coral or yellow poinsettia looks right from fall through New Year's. Try these off-the-beaten-path varieties: **1** 'Majestic Pink' **2** 'Gold Rush' **3** 'Love U Hot Pink' **4** 'Peppermint Ruffles' **5** 'Classic White' **6** 'Envy.' "There are two camps at the holidays," says Angela Mekjian of Dümme Orange, growers of more than 60 million poinsettias each year. "One is the traditional decorator. But for the more trendy or edgy among us, there are the spangled, spotted, and vibrant colors."





## TOO PRETTY TO OPEN

On second thought, these gift toppers might warrant skipping the wrapping paper altogether. Layers of heavy-weight crepe paper create bracts with plenty of body. Lightly brushing on glitter glue gives the paper a light curl when dry. A mix of gold and silver glitter forms the center.

HOW-TO  
ON PAGE 136.





## MAKE AN ENTRANCE

A felt wreath in a full complement of reds, pinks, and peaches gives a warm welcome. We used food coloring to dye wool felt to mimic the variegation of a few new plant varieties, but try solid red to keep it more traditional. We attached the dyed felt bracts to a wreath form and added pom-poms as the centers.

HOW-TO  
ON PAGE 136.



## THE IN CROWD

Poinsettia bracts shine when mixed with flowers of similar hues and varied textures. Here 'Majestic Pink' and 'Peppermint Ruffle' mingle with anemone, roses, and viburnum berries. Frosty-looking dusty miller winterizes the mix.



## POINSETTIA POINTERS

### SAFE TRAVELS

Poinsettias are tropical plants, first brought from their native Mexico to Washington, D.C., in 1825 by diplomat Joel Roberts Poinsett. Transport them in a box or plastic sleeve if below 55 degrees.

### SUNNY SITUATION

Once home, keep plants at room temperature and where they will get plenty of indirect sunlight, but don't let them touch cold windows. Water when the soil is dry to the touch, but don't let it pool.

### BALMY AND DRY

The plants are pretty forgiving. The main reasons they might flag are standing water and too-cool room temps. Healthy leaves should face up (not curl inward), and roots should be white.

### TENDER LOVIN' CARE

Contrary to popular belief, poinsettias are not toxic; although, if a kid or pet eats some, they can expect a minor stomachache. The milky white sap can irritate skin, so wear gloves if you are sensitive. ■