

UNL Extension: Acreage Insights

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Selection of Holiday Plants

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I can't think of too many plants that say Christmas as much as poinsettias. Place one in a room, and that's all you need to make a strong holiday statement, unless you want to add a yellow one, or a Christmas rose poinsettia, or any of the unusual cultivars. But regardless of the poinsettia type, be assured poinsettias ARE NOT poisonous!

There are other gift plants for Christmas. Azaleas add a splash of color and take on a more hardy aspect with their woody stems. They have an extended blooming time provided you buy one that has more flower buds than open flowers. Like poinsettias, they like cool to moderate temperatures.

Cyclamens make a showing in the florist shop during the holiday season as well. Their colorful flowers that droop down and silvery green leaves make a perfect counterbalance for the poinsettia. Cyclamens are problematic, however. Too much water on your part can rot the plant. Keep the water off the center of the plant. Cyclamens thrive on high humidity. They turn brown if they don't get it. Insects and other creepy crawlies love cyclamens. Mites and aphids are common pests. Try to keep them away from other houseplants to keep cross-infestation at a minimum.



Christmas cacti display their exotic blooms, though they are often confused with Thanksgiving or Easter cactus. A blooming cactus is a nice touch. It might be the perfect plant for a warmer, drier location. The big overriding factor is that dramatic - or even moderate - changes in environment will cause the blooms to drop off. These plants don't like changes in light, humidity and temperature.

Christmas pepper and Christmas cherry are other plants sold during the holidays. The cherry is really a pepper, but they don't even look like one another. The pepper looks like one of those small hot types, and they are really hot! The cherry looks like a little red styrofoam ball. This plant is attractive, but the fruit is poisonous. It's best not to display it near little kids.