



Patty's Plants

SEASONAL FLOWERING PLANTS

From the Past into the Present

Abutilon – Flowering Maples like lots of light but need to be protected from the hot afternoon sun. It can be outside in the summer in partial shade. Keep this plant moist, but not wet. There are many different varieties and colors. This plant was very popular and was a favorite in the 1800's. It can take a cooler room in the winter. *The flowers were thought of as being like hoop petticoats made of crepe paper because of the way they swing under their maple leaf foliage. Not a maple but in the mallow family as is the hollyhock. It is native of Brazil.*

African violet - *Saintpaulia*. *Not as hard as some people think.* One of grandmothers favorites. They like a north or east window. Water with warm water in a saucer or violet pot.

Don't keep water in the saucer or pot all the time or you could have some root damage. They can be washed in warm water (it rains in the rainforest of Africa were it grows wild) and put in a shady area until it dries, or you can use a soft paintbrush to dust the leaves. These are just another wildflower in their native land, Africa. Hence the name. Discovered by Baron von Saint Paul from Europe. They have been a favorite for over 50 years. They are not really a violet at all but are related to the gloxinia, streptocarpus, episcia family. Weak fert. once a month.

Amaryllis– One of the most eye-catching of all. This bulb will take 5-6 weeks after planting before you will see the first shoots. So plan accordingly if you want it to bloom near Christmas. After flowering the leaves must be kept growing until they start to turn yellow in August. Then amaryllis need a rest period in a cool spot about 60°. In 4-5 months it can begin all over again. *Discovered in 1828 by Dr. Edward Frederick Poeppig On a plant hunting expedition in Chili. Go to the Greek Legend Story at: pattyplants.com*

Azalea -Indoor Available throughout the year in many shades of pink, peach and white. This is not a hardy plant for outside planting.

It will bloom for 4-5 weeks. You must never let it dry out. Use a fertilizer like Miracid at 1/2 strength once a week. It was said that in 1945 in England there was an Azalea growing in a container that was over 150 years old. In Japan they were passed down from generation to generation for centuries. So you don't need to throw them out when they are done blooming but they do need a little special treatment to bloom again. Plant or take outside all summer then bring back in about the 1st week in September.

Begonia-Rex— *This is a great indoor plant for a medium to low light . The soil must dry out slightly between watering. There are many different varieties. No two are exactly alike. A north or east window is prefect. There are between 500– 2000 different species of begonias . They are a windowsill plant from way back. There is one called 'Sophie Cecile' was introduced in 1961, the 'Iron Cross' in 1952 native to China, that are still around today. The Iron Cross Begonia was named this because the cross in the leaves looks like the German iron cross.*

Begonia-Rieger *This plant blooms for months at a time. It's very easy to care for. The Rieger likes light but no direct sun. It can take cooler Temperatures, 60*-70*. Don't let this begonia get bone dry or the flowers will turn brown on the edges.*

Camellia— *This it a winter blooming plant for us. It likes bright light but no direct sun. It loves cooler temperatures around 50-60*. Never let them dry out. Fertilize weekly when the buds are forming with a week solution . It was cultivated for centuries in the Orient, but they didn't appear here in the U.S. until the late 1800's. It belongs to the tea family.*

Christmas Cactus— *This is actually a tropical plant. It grows high in the forest of Brazil and attaches its roots to trees. It is an epiphyte which has a very little root system. After flowering it needs 2 months to rest. At this point give it very little water and no fertilizer. In March—May it should start to get new growth on the tips. This is when you fertilize again with a 1/2 strength solution. In June —July, it's time for it to rest again. Water sparingly and don't fertilize. By August—Sept. increase watering. Needs 12 hours of darkness. Blooms in response to shorter days and longer nights like poinsettias. It should start to set buds. But it only blooms on new growth so if everything went well during the different stages, you*

should have a beautiful plant for Christmas. Discovered in the 1800's by an explorer from Belgium . Was first offered commercially in the mid-1800's by a nursery in London. Bud- drop caused by many things, usually over-watering, lack of humidity or not enough light. It should be called the 'Holiday Cactus' because they can bloom anytime from Autumn to Spring.

Crown of Thorns- *Full sun is must for this one. It can take temperatures between 50-100*. It likes to dry slightly between watering but not to dry or the leaves will turn yellow and fall off. Use a cactus soil mix when repotting. Very easy. It's from the island of Madagascar and became popular in Europe in the beginning of the 1800's. The name was chosen because people believed this was the plant that was used to make Christ's crown of thorns. The red flowers are symbolic of his blood. Research has shown that it couldn't have been . Even so, the name stayed the same. It is a member of the spurge family, a euphorbia.*

Cyclamen- *This plant was usually grown for Valentine's Day, but it has gotten very popular for Christmas too. It needs a cool room (68*) also a bright area but no hot sun. A north or east window would be the best. Because it grows from a corm it's very easy to over water. So let it dry slightly between watering. The cyclamen will bloom from Sept. to March. It does go dormant when the weather gets to hot. Most people throw it out at this point. They grow as wildflowers and are native to southern Turkey. Their ancestors of our first florist types are over 200 years old. Called 'Sowbread' because it was a favorite food of the wild boars. In 1597 It was said a woman 'with child' should not go near them or she lose the baby. But they also said if you make flatbreads out of the corms and serve them to someone you fancy it becomes a love potion.*

Golden Candle- *This is a very old-fashioned plant that was rediscovered in the late 1970-1980's. Place in a bright area but no direct hot sun. Water with warm water. Loves humidity. Same family as the shrimp plant and sometimes called that. This is from the mountain forest of Mexico and Peru where it grows 4 feet. They are treated here with a growth Retardant so it stays a decent size.*

Gloxinia- *Likes bright light but no direct sun. Prefers 68* to 72* temperatures. An east or north window is best. Never mist the leaves. They do grow from a tuber so it will need to rest . After the last flower is gone let the plant dry out . The rest will take about 2-4 months. Called the Latin Beauty. Relative of the African violet .*

Jerusalem Cherry- *The cherry of this plant is very poisonous and you must be careful if you have small children or pets. It is an easy plant to grow in a sunny window sill. It must never dry out. It is a colorful plant that lasts along time for seasonal color. Usually found around Christmas-time. Native to Brazil. Member of the nightshade family, like tomatoes, peppers eggplant , potatoes. Very sensitive to gas leaks, dumps its leaves over night.*

Ornamental Pepper- *You can eat the pepper on this plant but it is extremely hot. It's a fun plant to have as a conversation piece around the fall and winter holidays. Place in a sunny window sill but do not let it dry out completely. From South America. An ancient cultivated plant used by the Indians long before the Spanish discovered American. One of Columbus's fellow explorers described it in a letter in 1494 and in 1514 it was introduced to Europe. Was very popular in Hungary where their dried and ground it for spice.*

Paperwhites- *Paperwhites are a non hardy Narcissus. This bulb will grow inside in any type of soil. But since it is grown to be forced, you can plant the bulbs in water, rocks, marbles. The container can be glass, ceramic or metal. They are very fast growing so you'll want to stagger the plantings. They can not be replanted once they are done blooming. The Chinese Sacred Lily. It's cousins grow wild among the volcanic rocks of the Canary Islands. There are over 100 distinct varieties found in various parts of the world.*

Poinsettias *The Mexican Wild flowers were discovered in 1825 by Dr. Joel Robert Poinsette. He was the first US ambassador of Mexico. They grow 12 feet in their native land. They are a Euphorbia. Not poisonous, but they should be keep away from children and pets. If eaten it could make them sick. Called the 'Flower of the Holy Night' in Central America, ' Christmas Star' in the Netherlands and 'Flower of the Christmas Eve' in Spanish 'Flor de Nochebuena. .*

All of these flowers can be grown in your home with a little care and the love for gardening. A winter garden indoors can be very relaxing and relieve stress on that cold blustery day.

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