**Reblooming Holiday Plants**

**Segment for Week of Dec 27, 2021**

This is Pauline Milbourne bringing you information on shore friendly living and gardening from the Master Gardeners and Virginia Cooperative Extension. We have all been enjoying our indoor holiday plants. Poinsettias, amaryllis, and Christmas cactus brighten up our short days and are very undemanding – but how do we get them to rebloom next year? I will talk to you this week about how to make that happen.

Let’s begin with the poinsettia – it requires bright light, no drafts, dry soil between watering, and temperatures between 65 and 70°F. As the plant begins to shed its colorful bracts, new growth will begin to show. At this point, you can hold onto it until it can be transplanted it into the garden where it will become the size of a small annual shrub or save it as a potted plant with the goal of blooming again next year.

If you choose to go for the re-bloom, keep in mind there is no guarantee of achieving desired results. That said, however, it might be fun to give it a try. After the showy bracts are gone, set the plant in indirect light and temperatures around 55 to 60°F. Water sparingly. Cut the plant back to about 5 inches and re-pot it. As soon as new growth begins, place in a well-lighted window. After danger of frost, place it outdoors in partial shade. Pinch the new growth back to produce a compact plant until September 1st. As soon as the nights are cool, bring the plant indoors. Place it in full sun in the daytime and in 12 hours of darkness at night. Starting the short-day treatment in mid-September should blooms beginning around Dec. 1.

For the amaryllis, the secret is to keep the plant actively growing after it finishes blooming. Keep it in full sun in a spot above 60°F. As soon as danger of frost has passed, move it outside to a semi-shaded spot and continue to water. In early September, bring it in and stop watering to allow old growth to die back. Store in a cool, dark place to rest. Around November 1, bring it into a warm, well lighted room and water moderately to begin a new growth and flowering cycle.

The secret of good bloom for the Christmas cactus is correct nighttime temperature and light control. Christmas cacti develops buds and blooms if given bright light, short days, and night temperatures between 55 and 65°F. It blooms best when somewhat pot-bound. Full sunlight is beneficial in midwinter, but excessively bright summer light can cause decline.

Water your Christmas cacti less from October to March than during its growing season from April to September. A rest period, starting mid-Sept and continued for 8 weeks, is very important if plants are to bloom abundantly. Care should be taken not to water-log the soil during the winter months.

For more information or for answers to your questions, contact your local Accomack or Northampton County Extension Office. Here on the Shore call either 678-7946 or 787-1361