

Classic Christmas story

# Scrooge: How I kill my poinsettia

Yes, I am Ebenezer Scrooge. Good day to you. Are you surprised it's me? Bah, humbug!

I know it's the holidays—a total waste of time and money, in my opinion. The only thing I hate more than Christmas itself is the poinsettia I receive every year from my nephew. Let me tell you how I kill the plant every year—it's a wonderful feeling—maybe you can do the same thing this Christmas.

**Overwater your plant.** My favorite way to kill a poinsettia is to drown it. Holiday plants wrapped in decorative foil are most susceptible. When you water your poinsettia, let the water accumulate within the wrapping, making sure that the plant is always sitting in water. Whatever you do, don't punch holes in the foil at the bottom of the pot or pour water out of the wrapping; otherwise, the excess water will drain out and the plant will be happy.

A poinsettia that sits in water will soon suffer from root rot. Be-



fore you know it, your poinsettia will start drooping. When a plant droops, most gardeners think the plant still needs more water. They respond by watering it more, thereby killing the plant! Hee, hee! That foolishness brings joy to my cold, tiny heart.


**Set your plant near a drafty door or window.** The cold, drafty air will cause severe stress. Perhaps you can set the plant so its leaves rub against a frosty window! Exposing poinsettias to *chilly* temperatures below 60 degrees is a *cool* idea—by George, that pun was my first bit of humor in years!

**Watch your plant die—on TV.** You can literally watch your plant die while it sits upon the television. The warm drafts from the TV will cause the leaves to

dry out. Imagine: you can watch your favorite TV shows and during the commercials admire the pain your poinsettia is suffering! By the way, setting your plant near a radiator or heating vent will also cause the plant to cringe in pain. It's delightful!

**The dimmer, the better.** Poinsettias thrive in full sun. Since we want our poinsettia to die, look for the dimmest place possible. Before you know it, the plant will lose its colorful luster and begin dropping leaves. Of course, you could put your poinsettia in a dark closet—but then you wouldn't see the plant suffer!

One last thing—**poinsettias are NOT poisonous** (*editor's note: Scrooge is correct about this. He may be a miserable old man, but he is honest. The myth of the "poisonous poinsettia" started when a young Hawaiian girl mysteriously died. The parents recalled she had nibbled on a poinsettia earlier in the day and the myth has grown since then.*)

If you don't believe me, go ahead, try a bite. If you are foolish enough to eat lots of poinsettia leaves, you will get nausea. Good riddance I say to fools who eat houseplants. HUMBUG!!! 

**NDSU**  
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