

Green Matters

DPW Environmental and Natural Resources Division

Fort Gordon, Ga.



Upcoming Events / Training

Dec.10-11 Hazardous Waste Management Course 0800-1600, Bldg 11307

Dec. 17 Storm Water Industrial Training-0900-1300, Bldg 11307

The Christmas Poinsettia

Poinsettias are Christmas' favorite flower of the season. "According to Dr. Jim Faust , a poinsettia researcher at Clemson University, it is the number one selling potted plant in the nation." ²

A native South Carolinian from Charleston by the name of Joel Roberts Poinsett first discovered this festive plant in Mexico. He was the first U.S. minister to Mexico and stumbled upon it in 1828. And today there are over 100 cultivated kinds of poinsettias. ² Dec 12 is National Poinsettia Day in the US .¹

The Aztecs used the plant to make red dye and as a medication to reduce fevers. Also, the Poinsettias aren't highly toxic as rumored. Though the sap and latex of some plants contain toxins, they are very minute. A study done by Ohio State University showed that even in very large doses it was not life threatening.¹

You can extend the life of your poinsettia plant beyond the New Year to enjoy. With proper care, Poinsettias can last a month in the home.

It starts in the selection of the plant. Make sure you get a plant with healthy flowers, looking at the small , green and yellow berry structures in the center of the plant and choosing bright colored bracts spanning from bright red, white, pink or burgundy. Make sure the leaves are dark green and that the plant is full. Stay away from wilting , yellowing ,and damaged plants . Plants cramped in small containers may seem unusually large. Stay away from these as well. Poinsettias need containers that allow for growing room for their roots.

Poinsettias are tropical plants and grow best in temperatures between 50 and 75 degrees. In your home, they need at least 6 hours of indirect sunlight a day. Avoid placing them near any source of heat which can cause them to wilt and dry out. They don't like the cold either.

The soil should stay moderately moist. If the dirt feels dry to the touch water it. Allow the water to drain, so remove any decorative foil to allow proper drainage. The plant should not sit in standing water. Also, never fertilize while it is in bloom.

Let's take it a step further. You can even extend the life of your poinsettia and possibly get it to bloom again next year. By March or early April, the plants vibrant colors begin to fade. Once this happens , cut the plant back to 6-8 inches tall and fertilize with an all purpose liquid fertilizer. Once temperatures stay above 50 degrees, move your plant outside. Keep it in the shade at first then slowly move it to less shade over a two week period ending in full sunlight. Continue to fertilize every 2-3 weeks all the way until the fall season. In June, replot the plant into a bigger container and by Sept.1 cut back any new shoots to promote fullness. Again, once the temperatures drop below 60 F, bring the plant indoors. The first week of October keep the plant in 14 hours of total darkness at night and then 6-8 hours of bright sunlight. It is very important not to interrupt the dark cycle...in any way. This is a key component from keeping the bloom cycle from resetting. Come Thanksgiving and Christmas, your efforts shall be rewarded with vibrant colors. ²

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Environmental Justice

1982 Warren County, North Carolina -6,000 trucks loaded down with polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) laced soil headed to the newly built hazardous waste landfill. Prior to that in 1973 the Ward Transformers Company was dumping 31,000 gallons of PCB on the side of the road in 14 counties in North Carolina. Why would the state allow such toxic waste to be dumped in the community of Afton with the possibilities of the toxic PCB leaching into the drinking water system? A poor community made up of 75% African Americans , Warren county was the perfect spot to target for environmental racism! In addition, the town had no mayor or city council. The community greatly frustrated over the potential harmful consequences of the state's actions, decided to take matters into their own hands. They banded together with other supporters and literally stopped the trucks in their tracks. They lied down on the road leading to the landfill in protest of the negligent actions they were about to take. The trucks still dumped the contaminated soil regardless of their efforts to stop it. This one action in 1982 sparked a political movement with nationwide attention and was the beginning of what became known as the Environmental Justice Movement .



In the end, after 3 lawsuits and limited environmental studies, the Warren county commissioners reached an agreement with the state government. They promised that the contaminated landfill would not be enlarged and that Warren County would not become a toxic waste land. The community still was not happy with the end results. In 1983 water was found underneath the landfill that was contaminated and something had to be done. Finally by 2003 the state implanted a plan to clean it up and destroy the PCB.



But more importantly what this event did was spark awareness around the country of this type of injustice being pushed on lower class, poor minorities. People who fell in these categories lacked connections to people in influential positions or lacked the funds to hire legal counsel. Some were ignorant to the effects that these pollutants could have on their health. As a result, this led to the birth of the Environmental Justice Movement.



By 1990, with constant pressure from activist around the country, people started listening and changes were happening. Later in that year, the U.S.EPA's office of Environmental Equity was created. In 1992 under the Presidency of Bill Clinton, two environmental justice leaders were appointed, Reverend Benjamin Chavis and Dr. Robert Bullard, to the Natural Resources transition team.

On February 11, 1994 Executive Order [12898](#), "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations", was signed. According to the EPA " the order is intended to promote nondiscrimination in federal programs substantially affecting human health and the environment. The Order also provides minority and low-income communities access to public information and an opportunity to participate in matters relating to human health or environment." ^{3,4,5}



Compliance Corner

More Environmental Acronyms

- ⇒ **CAA-Clean Air Act**
- ⇒ **CERCLA- Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation & Liability Act (1980)
(Superfund for clean-up or hazardous waste sites)**
- ⇒ **CFR- Code of Federal Regulations**
- ⇒ **CO- Consent Order**
- ⇒ **NEPA- National Environment Policy Act**



Asbestos Awareness

What to do if you think you have encountered friable (air borne) asbestos containing material

1. Leave the asbestos containing material alone.
2. Keep activities to a minimum in the area to avoid further disturbance.
3. Take precautions to avoid further damage.
4. **Don't** dust, sweep, vacuum or disturb debris in any way.
5. Avoid tracking debris from room to room.⁷
6. If suspect materials are encountered contact DPW, Compliance Branch @ 706-791-9652.



Look Before You Leap...Winter Storm Prep

With winter upon us it's hard not to remember the ice storm that hit the CSRA last February. Downed power lines and trees left people stranded and without power for days. It was one of the worst ice storms we have seen in a long time. There are things that we can do in advance to be better prepared during a storm and to help survive the aftermath.

Weather Alerts

... What do they mean?

Winter Storm Outlook: A storm is possible within the next 2-5 days.

Winter Weather Watch: Storm conditions are possible within the next 36-48 hours. Stay informed and up-to-date on any approaching winter weather.

Winter Storm Advisory: The storms will cause inconveniences to your daily routines and may be hazardous but not life threatening. Use caution.

Winter Storm Warning: In the next 24 hours severe weather will be upon you and could be life threatening. Take precautions immediately!

Before the Storm

Knowing that a storm is approaching gives us a little time to prepare, but if you are like most, waiting to the last minute isn't the best move. Go ahead and have an emergency plan in place to avoid the hustle and panic that will be created with approaching severe weather. Here is a list of some basic supplies that the Red Cross recommends:

- **Water**– at least a 3 day supply, 1 gallon per person a day.
- **Food**– non-perishables
- **Flashlight with backup batteries**
- **Weather radio(battery/crank powered)**
- **First Aid kit**
- **Cell phone chargers for the car**
- **Alternate heat sources (fire places, wood stoves) and fuel supplies.**
- **Generators if you loose power**
- **Medications filled in advance**
- **Extra cash on hand**
- **Warm clothing for all home occupants**

After the Storm

- **Seek a designated shelter if you loose complete power.**
- **Avoid driving in severe weather and dangerous roads.**
- **Help those around you, such as the elderly or disabled.**

For more tips on preparing for severe weather visit www.redcross.org.

Sources:

1 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poinsettia>

2-South Carolina Living , [Perfect Poinsettias](#), by S. Cory Tanner

3 <http://www.nrdc.org/ej/history/hej.asp>

4 http://sites.duke.edu/docst110s_01_s2011_sb211/what-is-environmental-justice/history/

5 <http://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/events/20th-anniversary.html>

6 http://www.redcross.org/images/MEDIA_CustomProductCatalog/m4240231_WinterStorms.pdf

7 <http://www2.epa.gov/asbestos/protect-your-family#doanddont>