

TECH TIP: POINSETTIAS ARE NOT TO BE FEARED!



Poinsettias can be a tough crop, especially for novice/beginner growers, but they're not impossible to grow. In some ways, seeing if you can grow a high-quality poinsettia can serve as a great test for whether growing floriculture crops is right for you or not. Also, despite being (essentially) a commodity crop, there is some money to be made on poinsettias ... if you play your cards right. Before you order your first-ever poinsettia liners (Note: Growing from unrooted cuttings your first time is not recommended), here are some things to consider:

Know WHY you're growing poinsettias. Is your goal to:

- Add a new crop to your seasonal offerings?
- Keep your (traditionally) part-time staff employed through the holiday season?
- Extend your business' operating season further into fall/winter?
- Offset overhead during slow winter months?
- *Make sure you're growing poinsettias for the right reasons—not just “because.”*

Research your market.

- Who is buying poinsettias? Retailers, religious groups, florists?
- Who else is growing poinsettias in your area?
- What's the wholesale and retail market price in your locale?
- What is the desired finished specification for poinsettias in your market (i.e., branches or flowers per plant, height, colors, when do customers want them, etc.)?

Figure out your cost of production needed to hit the finished spec your customers want.

- If your cost will exceed your profit, are you willing to grow these as a loss-leader?
- Texas A&M put together some great resources on calculating cost of production for poinsettias: <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/ornamental/the-texas-poinsettia-producers-guide/economics-marketing/>

Note: these figures are based off of growing in a Zone 8 climate and will need to be adjusted for growing in more Northern climates.

Ask yourself: “Do I need to grow all of these myself this first year?”

- Consider producing a small number of plants from liners and buying mostly pre-finished for your first one- or two-years growing poinsettias.
- Pre-finished, where about 75% of the growing is already done (i.e., receive in Sept. to early Oct. and grow until you ship in Nov/early Dec), can be a lucrative strategy that reduces overhead and reduces risk.
- Many wholesalers offer pre-finished programs in a variety of popular colors and finished specs.
- Growing a limited number of plants from liners and doing most from pre-finished in year one or two gives you an opportunity to figure out what production strategy works best for your greenhouse without falling through for your customers.