

Holiday Plants

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Decorate your home naturally for the holidays by using some of these beautiful plants. It can be more difficult to get into the holiday spirit without cold and snow, but holiday plants bring a sense of familiarity. And one of the best things about our climate is that you can continue to grow some of these plants year-round, including outside in your landscape!

Amaryllis

- ❖ Winter blooming lily bulb with large colorful flowers on sturdy stalks.
- ❖ Bulbs are usually sold in boxes. Plant bulb 1/3 above soil. If planted too deep, it may not bloom. After the bulb sprouts, place in a sunny location. Blooms 6-8 weeks after planting.
- ❖ For rebloom: After flower dies and stalks droop, cut off, and when leaves turn yellow in fall, cut back.
- ❖ Can be planted outdoors in dappled shade, but may naturally bloom in spring rather than at the holidays.

Christmas Cactus

- ❖ There are different varieties – Christmas, Thanksgiving (most common at holiday time), Easter.
- ❖ A succulent that lives in trees in native Brazil. Various colors.
- ❖ For rebloom: Needs 12-14 overnight hours of darkness starting in October. As budding approaches, back off on watering amount, and do not fertilize.

Cyclamen

- ❖ Colorful blooms throughout winter.
- ❖ Prefers lower temps than most houseplants.
- ❖ Careful about over-watering – never get the crown wet. Bottom water if possible.
- ❖ For rebloom: Leaves will die back after flowering. Place in dark, cool area and do not water until leaves appear in late summer. Then move to a bright light location and resume normal care. As winter approaches, move to a sunnier location to encourage flowering.

Paperwhites

- ❖ Narcissus (daffodil) family, but does not need chilling like other daffodils do.
- ❖ Very fragrant white blooms.
- ❖ Sold as bulbs. Place bulbs, pointy end up, in a 2" layer of pebbles, in a dish with sides high enough to prevent falling over. Add water to cover pebbles – do not cover bulb, just the roots. May also be planted in soil. Place in a cool sunny location. Will bloom in approximately 6 weeks.
- ❖ Can be planted outdoors, although they may not reliably rebloom.

Poinsettia

- ❖ Colorful "flowers" are actually leaf bracts. Many new colors have been bred nowadays. Color can be maintained through March.
- ❖ For rebloom: As the days get shorter in October, buds will set, but there must be complete darkness at night. Even a tiny bit of exposure during nighttime could prevent flowering.
- ❖ May be planted outdoors, but it is tender.

Norfolk Island Pine

- ❖ Resembles a small Christmas tree when sold in stores, but not a true pine.
- ❖ After the holidays, grow inside or on a lanai, in a sunny area, and do not overwater.
- ❖ Not recommended for outdoors here – too tender for our area (zone 10-11) and grows 60' tall.

To learn more about gardening in The Villages area, join us at the Landscape & Garden Club of The Villages. We provide knowledge to both newcomers and established residents in all areas (north, central, south) of the Villages. We meet every 1st Friday of the month (Sept-May) from 1-2:15pm at centrally located Rohan Rec Center. Prior to each meeting, you can bring in your gardening questions. We also have a plant share table, and a raffle of gardening products and potted plants. For more information about future meetings, sign up at: <http://eepurl.com/dfUglz>.

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