

Poinsettia's Story

December 1, 2023

Did you ever wonder why a tropical plant native to Mexico and Central America became such an important living symbol for the Holiday season second only to the Christmas tree? Legend has it that a young girl in 16th century Mexico was upset that she did not have a gift to give to the baby Jesus at the Christmas Eve service. Some recountings of the story say her cousin told her that any gift no matter how humble would be appreciated while other versions claim it was an angel that directed her to pick the bouquet of weeds that she did. When she laid them at the bottom of the Nativity scene, they were transformed into beautiful flowers. Because of this miracle and their resemblance to the Star of Bethlehem, they became known as the Flowers of the Holy Night.

We know them as Poinsettias as they were named after the man who brought them from Mexico to be grown at his plantation in the early 1800's. Joel Roberts Poinsett, besides being interested in botany, was the first U.S. ambassador to Mexico. Poinsettias, however, did not gain their fame as a holiday symbol for another fiftyish years. Paul Ecke, an enterprising man saw an opportunity. Flowers in the Winter are scarcer so after cultivating the plant to become the compact beauty we know, he sent hundreds of free plants to decorate the sets of TV studios. Those sets included the Tonight Show and the Bob Hope Holiday Specials. The rest as they say is history.

Knowing that the poinsettia is a tropical plant, the following are some tips for keeping them healthy. When purchasing, make sure they are well packaged to protect them from cold and especially the wind on their travel to your house. Run all your other errands first so they can go straight to your home. Place them away from drafts in bright, indirect sunlight. Direct sunlight will fade their color. Water only when dry. Do not overwater. Make sure they have good drainage and do not sit in water. If you are a fan of the poinsettia and keep them alive until Spring, you can transplant them outdoors where they will continue to grow until the weather gets too cold.

The Holiday season is a very spiritual time and being Body Mind Spirit, we'd like to take a moment to consider an additional spiritual meaning of

this plant. According to Pegasus Products, the flower essence of this plant helps to create thought forms of hope. Particularly a collective hope for humanity. It balances the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd chakras to strengthen love for others and a group consciousness. Having a poinsettia in your home or workspace can help hold these energies. After all, Edward Bach (creator of the Bach Flower Remedies), rediscovered flower essences by spending time with different plants and noting the different emotions their flowers evoked. Working with a flower essence is working on a therapeutic level and the most effective but not necessary to reap benefits. Note - if you want to work with the remedy and make your own flower essences, do not make this in the traditional method. Use a two bowl system so that no part of the plant touches what will become the essence. While not poisonous, poinsettias are considered toxic. Also, if you find yourself sneezing around them, you might have a latex allergy as poinsettias contain natural latex. Otherwise, enjoy these beautiful symbols of the hope and joy of the season!

"Let us all come together and spread happiness and joy using the poinsettia plant, which has always been special." - Unknown