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# Poinsettia enters dormant period

From page 19.

If you want to keep your poinsettia alive and healthy as an outdoor shrub, or as a houseplant, it is a straightforward procedure, but it will become a plant that looks very different from the compact colourful potted plant you originally bought.

In the wild, poinsettia enters a dormant period after bloom time, triggered by the warm dry season.

Its bloom time is tied to the shortening daylight time of autumn and winter.

Your task now is to mimic these drought conditions and trick your plant into taking the dormant rest period it needs to come back strong and to shake off the effects of all of the artificial treatments it went through in its youth. (At the blooming end of the life cycle, 14 hours of absolute darkness per day for eight weeks is necessary in the autumn for it to produce its colourful bracts. This is the part that seems more trouble than it's worth.)

To start the process of rescuing your plant, slow down on watering, letting it almost dry out, until it has dropped all its leaves.

At this point, stop watering altogether and cut the stems back to just three to four inches above soil level. Store the plant as is, in a dark corner at average

room temperature, keeping the soil just one notch up from bone-dry.

A trick I use to keep just that bit of moisture in a plant's environment while dormant is to put it in a paper bag with an unbruised apple.

Around late March you'll see it try to put out new growth, signalling the end of the dormant period. It's now time to help it "wake up".

Repot in fresh soil with good drainage. Bring it gradually into the brightest spot you have, but not direct sunlight. Start watering, only a bit at first and more as it grows faster.

Once growth is rapid, fertilize with a general plant food at half the recommended strength and keep the soil evenly moist, but not too wet.

At this point, it's ready to put out in the garden, but you have to wait until all danger of frost is past. Keep the light as strong as you can to ensure branches don't get stretched out and leggy.

If you have the time to fuss, put it outside on warm spring days and bring it in at night.

Once the danger of frost has passed, you can plant it in your garden in a partial shade to full sun position. Expect a three-to-four-foot shrub with deep green leaves tinged with a bit of red at the veins by mid-summer.

It won't bloom, but it makes an attractive foliage backdrop for

some favourite flowers.

Now here's the magic wand bit. If you want to try your hand at getting it to bloom again, here's the general instructions, but you're unlikely to get blooms anywhere near the size to which you're familiar.

Follow the above procedure, but plant your poinsettia in a pot, instead of in the garden.

Fertilize regularly at half the recommended strength to ensure a vigorous and strong stemmed plant.

In June, give it a hard pruning back to produce a more compact plant.

In late September, start the 14-hours-of-darkness-per-day treatment for eight weeks.

I have never tried this, but I'm told this really needs to be complete and uninterrupted darkness, which is where the black plastic bag comes in.

It needs to be in a consistently warm place during this time. Once it is blooming, keep it in a coolish place out of direct sunlight and don't overwater.

There you go! The cycle is complete.

*Evelyn Wolf is a local gardening expert and owner of Garden Possibilities Bookstore at 234 Main St. S. Call for information on her popular gardening classes which resume for the winter/spring season, starting in mid-January. 905-830-9693 or 800-723-2666 or www.gardenpossibilities.com*

# Scrapbooks offer comfort

From page 19.

and lignin-free paper or adhesive, can accelerate the deterioration of a photograph.

"I've seen people do beautiful work and use construction paper and photos fade so badly."

Construction paper can have a high acid content and expose photos to acid if used as a background, said the consultant for Creative Memories.

Making scrapbooks can be beneficial for many people, Ms Farguson said.

For couples, going through scrapbooks or albums can remind them why they were attracted to each other at the beginning of their relationship.

For a client of Ms Farguson who lives in Sharon, a scrapbook provides her mentally challenged aunt with photographs of relatives while she stays in a group home.

Scrapbooks can be good for Alzheimer's patients, Ms Farguson added.

"They can really relate to albums from several years ago. It's a comfort to

them, something familiar.

At journalling seminars, Ms Farguson sometimes hands out a black and white photograph she bought from an antique store in Baldwin of a beautiful, young woman she believes was photographed in the mid to late 1860s. She uses the picture to remind students how important it is to keep information about photographs, such as why the picture was taken, when it was taken and where.

The stories that go with pictures are what make them so important to us. If we are gone and the stories aren't there with those pictures, they won't be nearly as important to other people.

She finds plenty of photographs in antique shops and believes passionately this is wrong.

"You should never be able to buy somebody else's family. They (photos) should be in an album so it can be passed on from generation to generation."

For more information, try the Creative Memories website at <http://www.creativememories.com>

## Markham-Stouffville Hospital Receives \$41,000 From The Canadian Tire Foundation For Families

Markham, ON - (Dec. 18, 2003) - Markham-Stouffville Hospital received a welcome donation today when it was presented with \$41,000 from the Canadian Tire Foundation for Families and five local Associate Canadian Tire dealers. Canadian Tire Associate Dealer Cameron Beach presented the cheque to Gina Rosen, President, and Marion Zimmer, Manager of Corporate and Major Gifts Markham-Stouffville Hospital Foundation. The money was raised through store collections during the grand opening of the new Markham store on Markham Rd. Associate Dealers John Fox, David Clifford, Ian McKenzie & Chris Coenen also helped raise the total funds. The drive to raise money for the new MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) for the Hospital was matched dollar for dollar by the Canadian Tire Foundation for Families.

"Thanks to the generosity of our customers, my fellow local Associate dealers and our Foundation for Families we are in a position to be able to make this donation to help the Hospital continue to provide essential tests for patients in the Markham community," said Cameron.

"I would like to thank Cameron and his staff at the Markham Rd Canadian Tire store as well as the Canadian Tire Foundation for Families for this very significant donation to the MRI. What a difference this donation will make to the community!" said Gina Rosen. "I am not sure we can honor Cameron's request to change the name of the MRI to 'Mastercraft' Resonance Imaging but we'll work on it. The Canadian Tire Foundation for Families is a charitable organization with a clear objective, helping families when they need it most. Its mission is to provide a helping hand to families in need, ensuring that life's basic needs are met: food, shelter, clothing & essential goods. In addition to community fundraising events and initiatives, the Canadian Tire Foundation for Families also provides a crisis response network, ready to go to work in times of natural disaster or crisis. From the events of September 11th in the US, the ice storm in Quebec, to the tainted crises in North Battleford, Vanguard, Charlottetown, Glace Bay & Walkerton Canadian Tire is there in times of need."



Pictured (left to right): David Clifford-Associate Dealer-Rylander, Jason Clubine-Assistant General Manager Stouffville, Marion Zimmer-Manager Corporate & Major Gifts-Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation, Cameron Beach-Associate Dealer-Markham Road, Gina Rosen-President Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation, John Fox-Associate Dealer-Markham & Lawrence, Zeib Jeeva-Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation Board, (Associate Dealers Ian McKenzie & Chris Coenen were not present for the photo)

## WAL-MART CORRECTION NOTICE

Due to circumstances beyond our control, the Ladies' Bum Equipment Active Jacket or Pants featured on page 16 of our current flyer (ending Jan. 18th) will not be available.

We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused.

## WAL-MART CORRECTION NOTICE

Due to circumstances beyond our control, the Ladies' Yoga Top or Pants featured on page 15 of our current flyer (ending Jan. 18th) will not be available.

We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused.