



cy of watering and place the plant where temperatures range between 40 and 50 degrees until spring. Then repot in fresh soil with the upper half of the corm above the soil and grow outdoors in a protected spot. Bring it inside again before frost and give it bright light and cool temperatures, and it should flower again for the holidays.

When your household gets back to normal after the holidays, place your poinsettia in a sunny window, but be sure it doesn't suffer temperatures lower than 62 degrees F by night or higher than 72 degrees during the day.

If you can't be certain it won't be too cool at night, move the plant back into

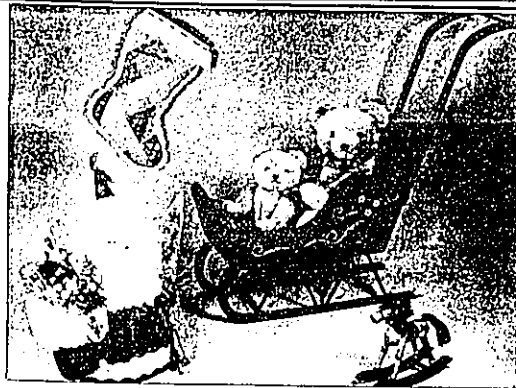
the room. Use warm tap water to moisten the soil thoroughly, but only when the soil feels dry to the touch.

WHEN THE COLOR bracts start falling in the six weeks after receiving the plant, realize that this is the plant's natural resting period and a crucial time for caring for it. It should be moved to a cool, light place and the watering reduced until the soil is almost bone dry. The plant will revert to nature and reach for the sky unless you prune rather drastically in April, reducing the stems to three-inch stubs, and controlling the "bleeding" by rubbing a little powdered charcoal into the surfaces. If you wish, cut the prunings to six-inch slips which may be rooted to make more plants.

Now repot your freshly pruned poinsettia into fresh soil, water lightly and place in a sunny but cool window. When new shoots sprout from the stubs, thin out to three or four so the plant won't be too bushy. After all danger of frost is past in the late spring, sink the pot to its rim outdoors with morning sun only and keep watering and fed through the summer.

When fall comes bring the plant inside. It is essential that the plant receive 12-14 hours of unbroken darkness every night, starting the first to second week of October.

Your poinsettia will need lots of sunshine during the day, but it must have the Dracula treatment after the sun sets — keep it in a room where no lights are turned on even momentarily because this would create an artificially long day and would delay blooming.



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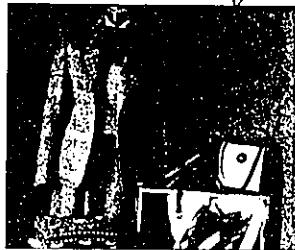
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