



The Winter Newsletter for the Antigonish & Lismore Garden Clubs

- **Winter brings some uncertainty to our regular meetings , so we thought a few items of gardening interest might take us over the worst.**
- **This version will focus on our indoor winter ornamentals**
 - **Poinsettias**
 - **Amaryllis**
- **Hopes for Spring- Seed Catalogues galore**
- **Our next effort may deal with**
 - **“Growing from Seed” tips.**
 - **Plantings for Birds & Insects**
 - **Dealing with Winter Damage**
- **Please feel free to convey a topic you think would be of interest.**



- Christmas season has come and gone, but many may still have some of the festive plants to nurture and keep happy for the next few months.
- Foremost among the candidates would be the Poinsettia. Long gone are the days when we only saw the typical red bracts and green leaves. There have been many inventions in recent years. The poinsettia is the best-selling potted plant in North America.
- Poinsettias are a part of the holiday season that everyone takes for granted, like Christmas trees, white lights, and fruit cake.
- Perhaps we, as gardeners, can insure that some of the millions of plants available live to see another day.





Poinsettia Facts



- Poinsettias are semi-tropical plants, so the indignity of a Nova Scotia winter isn't very appealing. They need to be protected from cold drafts, too much heat, some water, but not too much.
- Your poinsettia at home, needs to be in a cool, sunny location away from drafts. Water whenever the soil feels dry, but never let the pot sit in water. Always pour off excess water from its saucer.
- Contrary to popular belief, poinsettias are not poisonous if ingested. They do exude a white, milky sap. While not poisonous if ingested, the sight of the sap can be alarming, and probably contributes to the myth. In many species, this sap can cause mild skin rashes.

Poinsettia Aftercare



BASIC CARE :

The length of time your poinsettia will give you pleasure in your home is dependent on (1) the maturity of the plant, (2) when you buy it, and (3) how you treat the plant.

- Unwrap your poinsettia carefully and place in indirect light. Six hours of light daily is ideal. Keep the plant from touching cold windows.
- Keep poinsettias away from warm or cold drafts from radiators, air registers or open doors and windows.
- Poinsettias require daytime temperatures of 60 to 70°F and night time temperatures around 55°F. High temperatures will shorten the plant's life. Move the plant to a cooler room at night, if possible.
- Check the soil daily. Be sure to punch holes in foil so water can drain into a saucer. Water when soil is dry. Allow water to drain into the saucer; discard excess water. Wilted plants tend to drop bracts sooner.
- Fertilize the poinsettia if you keep it past the holiday season. Apply a houseplant fertilizer once a month. Do not fertilize when it is in bloom.
- With good care, a poinsettia will last many weeks in your home.

HOW DO YOU GET A POINSETTIA TO RE-BLOOM?

- Colour will begin fading from the bracts in April and May, and some foliage may fall. If you want to keep the plant going through the summer, cut the stems back to four inches (10 cm), and repot the plant, removing some of the old compost and replacing it with fresh soilless mix. (The cuttings can be rooted to make additional plants, using powdered rooting hormone, clean pots and soilless mix.)
- **Feed with a balanced fertilizer (such as 10-10-10) every four weeks. The poinsettia can summer outdoors in indirect light, but avoid direct sun on the foliage.**
- **To get a poinsettia to reflower you have to keep it in total darkness between 5 pm and 8 am. Start this around October 1st and continue until color shows on the bracts; usually around early to mid-December. Any little exposure to light can prevent flowering. Covering the plant with a light-proof bag and placing it in a closet might work. Night time temperatures above 70-75°F can delay or prevent flowering.**

For much more information check out ["The Poinsettia Pages"](#)



Amaryllis

- Next to Poinsettias, Amaryllis are likely the next most popular winter bloomer for many households. New bulbs are almost guaranteed to produce glorious bloom with very little effort.
- Canadians buy more than half a million amaryllis bulbs each fall.
- Amaryllis are natives of South Africa, but have gained world renown thanks to many breeders worldwide. They now exhibit a host of colours coupled with variety in flower form and plant size.
- The Netherlands is one of the primary producers of amaryllis for our markets. Bulbs come in a variety of sizes and typically “bigger is better”. Pleasant Valley Nurseries in Antigonish brings in wonderful big bulbs each fall.

- Plant them in a pot with the top third of the bulb above the soil's surface. They'll thrive in virtually any growing mix, as long as there is good drainage.
- Firm soil around the bulb and water it well. Do not water again until it shows active growth.
- Heavier clay pots are preferable to plastic ones, which tend to topple over when the large stalks develop. Place them in a well-lit spot and water sparingly.
- Place the planted container in a bright, warm room that is 18-24°C by day and cooler at night. The first signs of the bud stalk will start to push up within a few weeks. Leaves may appear at the same time or later.
- Water whenever the top of the soil feels dry and fertilize twice a month with a water soluble fertilizer such as 15-30-15.
- Rotate the pot regularly to encourage even growth.
- Ensure a form of support is provided. The flower stalk will elongate quickly to a height of 45-100 cm and become very heavy when the 4 blossoms at the top start to open.
- Move the plant into a cooler spot away from direct sunlight as the flowers will not last as long in the heat and bright light.



- To make amaryllis bloom again, remove the seed head after flowering and let the leaves develop normally. The stalk can remain, it will nourish the bulb.
- Fertilize every month with a water-soluble product such as 20-20-20 to produce lots of healthy, green foliage. Then put the pot outdoors in a semi-shaded area after all chance of frost has past.
- Keep the pot well watered; don't let it dry out. A mulch of leaves, straw or a bit of sphagnum over the surface of the pot will keep soil moist
- In September, stop fertilizing and watering. When leaves become floppy and yellow, cut them off.
- Bring the pot indoors and store in a cool room, such as an unheated porch or garage; the temperature should not exceed 17°C and never drop below freezing. Don't water.
- After about two months, bring the pot where it's room temperature. Water sparingly until a new shoot appears, then water twice a week until plant blooms again. Dormant bulbs can be repotted in new soil if desired. Bulbs don't mind crowding.
- Even with the best care, a bulb will sometimes not bloom the second year. Be patient and give it another season of TLC

2015 was a
pleasant
Amaryllis
season,
check this
link for some
visual
reminders

Amaryllis '15

*File may be
opened online or
downloaded*



Seed Catalogues

Winter may be a lamentable time for gardeners, but it is also a time for dreaming and planning for the new season.

The new crop of Seed Catalogues always makes this pursuit enjoyable. Many are only available online, while others still have a hard copy available.

There are several seed house based in Nova Scotia which offer many heritage and/or organic selections.

[Hope Seeds](#) is a small but committed seed company, with a dedication to local and sustainable agriculture since our beginning in 1993.

324 St. George St., Box 460, Annapolis Royal, NS B0S 1A0, PH: (902) 286-4673/HOPE

[Annapolis Seeds](#) in Nictaux, NS- operated by Owen Bridge

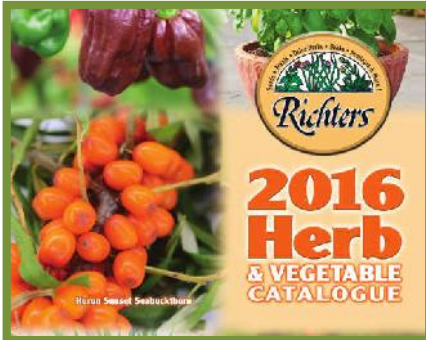
“All our seeds are open-pollinated, non-GMO, untreated, regionally adapted and grown with love. ”

[The Incredible Seed Company](#)

RR1 Pleasantville NS B0R 1G0

We are pleased to offer more than 225 varieties of high quality, open pollinated vegetable seed 1-888-851-6620

Seed Catalogues



[Richter's Herbs](#)

Richters Herbs, 357 Hwy 47

Goodwood, ON, L0C 1A0 Canada

Huge selection of herbs, flowers & vegetables, both seeds and plants. Online and written catalogue.

There are , of course, many of the standard well-established seed houses.
e.g. Vesey's, Halifax Seed, Stokes, William Dam, Lindenberg Seed

Canadian Seed Catalogue Index

A huge listing of almost every seed source in Canada

<https://seeds.ca/diversity/seed-catalogue-index>

Other seed sources are numerous and include Seed Exchanges and Seedy Saturdays.

Upcoming Events and News

**New Glasgow Garden Club invites District members
Saturday, January 23
1.30 pm at Glen Haven Manor, next to Aberdeen Hospital.
Our Guest speaker will be Margie Beck
“LESSONS LEARNED IN THE GARDEN”**

**Lismore & District Garden Club invites District members
Saturday, February 13, 2016 ~1:30 PM
at The Lismore Community Hall
“Getting to Know Magnolias”
Presentation by Sharon Bryson**

**NSAGC Annual [Convention](#)
June 3-4, 2016
The Wellness Center, Westville Road**

hopes that spring will come soon

