

Amaryllis and poinsettias, and cyclamens, oh my!



By, UCCE Master Gardener of Lake Tahoe

December in Lake Tahoe can be a somber time for gardening. But, if we just turn our focus inward (inside our homes) we can enjoy plenty of the beautiful hues, fragrances and leaf structures. At the holiday season we think of bright beautiful plants of reds, whites and greens. Here is a few of our favorite indoor plants that have deep roots in the holidays and that can be grown in a pot during our long Tahoe winter.



Amaryllis - It has been said that of all the flowering bulbs amaryllis is the easiest to bring to bloom. They are popular flowering bulbs grown indoors during the winter months. They have large, trumpet-shaped blooms can be 8 to 10 inches across and are produced atop an 18- to 30-inch-tall flower stalk. Flower colors include red, pink, orange, salmon, white, and bicolors. Single-flowering, double flowering, and miniature amaryllis varieties (cultivars) are available. Two to six flowers (the average is four) are produced on each flower stalk. Although their flowers resemble lilies, the amaryllis belongs to the Amaryllidaceae family. Its genus is *Hippeastrum*. Amaryllis are native to tropical and subtropical areas of the Americas. Both the bulb and the plant are poisonous.

More info and growing tips -

<https://store.extension.iastate.edu/Product/Growing-Amaryllis-PDF>

<https://lee.ces.ncsu.edu/2018/01/amaryllis-for-christmas/>



Poinsettia - We love these plants at this time of the year. They add such beautiful festive life to a home juxtaposed against the white ground outside. Poinsettia, *Euphorbia pulcherrima*, originally cultivated by the Aztecs in Mexico. They do well in the home and keep their color until mid-March. The showy red, pink, white, yellow, bicolored or speckled modified "leaves" are called bracts. *Quick Tips:* keep soil moderately moist- but no standing water, no direct sunlight, needs at least 6 hours of indirect, natural light each day, does not need fertilizer when in bloom- but can add after holidays to keep pigments if desired.

More info and growing tips -

<https://extension.colostate.edu/topic-areas/yard-garden/poinsettias-7-412/>

https://ucanr.edu/sites/edc_master_gardeners/files/133689.pdf

<http://www.ucanr.org/blogs/blogcore/postdetail.cfm?postnum=38844>



Cyclamens - in the family *Primulaceae* are native to alpine woodlands in parts of southern Europe, western Asia and North Africa near the Mediterranean.

Cyclamens can do well as potted indoor plants in Lake Tahoe. They prefer bright indirect light and need cool temperatures (mine do well in my window sill). They also do like moist soil and humidity to keep blooming (which can be hard when our wood or gas stoves are burning). I bet, your family and plants would love a little extra moisture in the air too so why not turn on the humidifier once in a while.

More info and growing tips...

<https://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheet/cyclamen/>

<https://hortnews.extension.iastate.edu/2003/3-7-2003/cyclamen.html>



Christmas Cactus - Schlumbergera bridgesii.

The Christmas cactus is a popular gift around the holidays and for good reason, they are beautiful! These houseplants are native to Brazil and are available in a wide variety of colors including red, rose, purple, lavender, peach, orange, cream and white. These species grow as epiphytes among tree branches in shady rain forests, and their cascading stems make them a great choice for hanging baskets. Flowering can last up to 8 weeks if the plants are kept around 68 degrees Fahrenheit. Make sure to keep the soil moisture and to keep out of direct sunlight like most house plants.

More info and growing tips...

[https://ucanr.edu/sites/Tuolumne County Master Gardeners/files/253003.pdf](https://ucanr.edu/sites/Tuolumne%20County%20Master%20Gardeners/files/253003.pdf)

<https://ucanr.edu/blogs/blogcore/postdetail.cfm?postnum=19702>

<https://www.facebook.com/sacmg/posts/prune-christmas-cactushave-you-pruned-your-christmas-or-thanksgiving-cactus-if-y/3067275926676492/>

Many other house plants have roots associated with the holidays. Let us know which grow best in your home. We always love to see your photos too!

Happy Holidays from the UCCE Master Gardeners of Lake Tahoe.