

## *Euphorbia pulcherrima*

### Scientific classification

**Kingdom** : Plantae  
**Clade** : Angiosperms  
**Order** : Malpighiales  
**Family** : Euphorbiaceae  
**Genus** : *Euphorbia*  
**Species** : *E.pulcherrima*



### Description

*Euphorbia pulcherrima* is a shrub or small tree, typically reaching a height of 0.6–4 metres (2–13 ft). The plant bears dark green dentate leaves that measure 7–16 centimetres (2.8–6.3 in) in length. The colored bracts—which are normally flaming red, with cultivars being orange, pale green, cream, pink, white, or marbled—are often mistaken for flower petals because of their groupings and colors, but are actually leaves. The colors of the bracts are created through photoperiodism, meaning that they require darkness (at least fourteen hours at a time for 6–8 weeks in a row) to change color. The flowers of the poinsettia are unassuming. They are grouped within the cyathia.

### Uses

Poinsettia is a flowering plant. The whole plant and its sap (latex) are used to make medicine. Despite safety concerns, people take poinsettia to treat fever, stimulate breast milk production, and cause an abortion. They also take the latex for pain, to kill bacteria, and to cause vomiting.