

## HOLIDAY PLANTS

This holiday season, why not add drama to your seasonal décor with plants. Poinsettias (*Euphorbia pulcherrima*) are perennial favorites, but many other colorful species deserve consideration.

Cyclamen (*Cyclamen persicum*) is pretty in pink, white and red. And Kalanchoe (*Kalanchoe blossfeldiana*) blooms with beautiful star-shaped flowers in red, pink, coral or yellow. Two other holiday favorites are Amaryllis (*Hippeastrum*) that bear gigantic trumpet blooms in a wide range of colors and Christmas Cactus (*Schlumbergera*) whose flowers can be red, pink, lavender or white.

Even Poinsettias aren't just red and white any more. Look for some in shades of pink, speckled with contrasting colors arranged in unique wavy flower clusters.

No plant is more symbolic of a Yuletide scene than the Christmas tree. My favorite is the Blue Spruce (*Picea pungens* Engelm), though some traditionalists might prefer a Scotch pine (*Pinus sylvestris*). Select a tree that is not shedding needles excessively and has good color, both signs of freshness. Make a new level cut at the trunk base, about one inch above the original cut, and place it in a container of cool water. Water must reach the base of the tree at all times. Make your trees last longer by placing them outside, out of direct sun. Keep at least one quart of water in the pan at all times.

Another way to create the Christmas tree-look, albeit smaller, is to use Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*). This tender perennial shrub has a distinctive scent that gives Rosemary its reputation as an herb of remembrance. Growers prune and shape the plant into a cone that can serve as a small tree. Prepare a wonderful welcome for holiday guests with Rosemary shrubs in decorative pots on each side of your front door. Accent with bows and trims in seasonal colors. About 30 minutes before guests arrive, spray the shrubs with water to enhance their fragrance for a memorable greeting. After the holidays keep the plants to start, or add to, an herb garden.

Any plant selected for holiday gifts or decorating deserves pretty container. Green, red and blue decorative pots keep a formal seasonal look. For bolder statements, choose chartreuse or aqua pots.

Visit Sunlight Stone & Pottery, Inc. in Wilton Manors to see pots that can help personalize your holidays.

