

Christmas Cactus

The Christmas cactus has become increasingly popular with the development of several new varieties. At least three related species are sold in addition to a number of cultivars. All have similar cultural requirements.

The secret of good bloom seems to be one of temperature and photoperiod control. They will develop buds and bloom if given bright light, short days, and night temperatures between 55 and 65 degrees Fahrenheit. Christmas cacti bloom best when somewhat pot bound. Repotting is necessary only about once in three years. Full sunlight is beneficial in midwinter, but bright sun during summer months can make plants look pale and yellow. These plants grow naturally shaded by a canopy of leaves.



Christmas cacti require less water from October to March than they do when growth is active from April to September. A rest period is very important if plants are to bloom abundantly. Dormancy should be started about the middle of September and continued for 8 weeks. Care should be taken that soil never becomes water logged during the dark days of winter.