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Fruehwirth

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[54] POINSETTIA PLANT NAMED '745'

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[58] Field of Search Plt./307, 303

[56] References Cited

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

P.P. 9,177 6/1995 Hrebeniuk Plt./307

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[57] ABSTRACT

Poinsettia '745' is a new cultivar, distinguished by dark red flower bracts, dark green foliage, self-branching characteristics and 9-week flowering response time. Secondary flower bracts are tightly clustered around the cyathia giving a full appearance to the bract presentation. The new plant produces a very desirable branched flowering pot plant for the mid-season holiday market. Poinsettia '745' is resistant to epinasty after being confined to shipping containers. The post-production foliage and bract retention are excellent even under low light intensities in the consumer's home.

1 Drawing Sheet

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BACKGROUND OF THE PLANT

This new Poinsettia cultivar, '745', originated as an induced self-branching sport of a seedling known as 'M-25' (not patented) in my greenhouse in Encinitas, Calif. It was selected because of its dark red flower bracts, dark green foliage, self branching characteristics, and mid-season flowering response; traits that distinguish it from other poinsettia cultivars, and seem to make it a desirable plant for commercial greenhouse production. After selection, '745' was vegetatively reproduced from stem cuttings for test purposes in Encinitas, Calif. 'M-25' is a proprietary plant and there are no specimens in the public domain. Poinsettia 'M-25' is not self-branching in that no axillary branches develop as long as the apical bud is not removed (pinched). '745' is self-branching in that during development axillary branches elongate without removal of the apical bud. Under short day conditions, the axillary branches will develop inflorescences.

Poinsettia '745' most closely resembles Poinsettia '718' (U.S. Plant Pat. No. 9,244), but differs in these aspects: '745' has darker red flower bracts, a flatter flower bract presentation and flowers earlier than '718' under the same cultural conditions. By subjecting clones of '745' to successive generations of vegetative propagation, it was demonstrated that the distinctive characteristics of '745' held true from generation to generation.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PHOTOGRAPHS

Poinsettia '745' is illustrated in the accompanying color photographs.

The upper photograph is a side view of a branched '745' plant in full flower.

The lower photograph is a top view of the same '745' plant showing flower and bract formation.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANT

The following is a detailed description of the new Poinsettia as observed in Encinitas, Calif., USA during December 1996. Observations were recorded from flowering plants, grown as one branched plant per pot. The pot was 14 cm in diameter and 11 cm in height. Color designations are compared to The 1986 edition of R.H.S. Colour Chart, first

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published in 1966 by The Royal Horticultural Society, London, England.

THE PLANT

The following chart summarizes some of the differences between Poinsettia '745' and the Poinsettia '718' (U.S. Plant Pat. No. 9,244), believed to be the plant it most closely resembles. Plants were observed under the same cultural conditions.

Plant	'745'	'718'
Flowering response	9 weeks	10 weeks
Bract color	RHS 46A-B	RHS 45A-B
Bract petioles	Straight	Twisted
Bract presentation	Flat	Loose & airy

Origin: Sport of poinsettia seedling 'M-25'. The sport was induced, by application of the procedures set forth in U.S. Pat. No. 4,724,276, to the seedling plant. Rootstock used was Angelika (U.S. Plant Pat. No. 5,492).

Classification:

Botanical.—*Euphorbia pulcherrima* Willd.

Common name.—Poinsettia.

Cultivar name.—'745'.

Form: Shrub.

Height: Short-medium.

Growth habit: As a single stemmed plant, upright and vigorous with self-branching side shoots. The application of a chemical growth retardant may be needed to restrict height for commercial pot plant production. I observed a branched plant in a pot with an overall height of 41 cm and an overall width of 56 cm. The diameter of individual inflorescences is 28 cm.

Branching: Axillary branches will develop and terminate in an inflorescence without pinching. However, it is usually desirable to pinch '745' before flower induction and remove all terminal dominance. Then, all axillary branches will develop uniformly and at a faster rate.

Growth rate: Rooting of stem cutting occurs in 12-18 days under intermittent mist. The plant will flower in about nine weeks under continuous long night conditions and night temperatures of about 16-18 degrees C.

Foliage: The foliage is clean and very dark green from bottom to top of the plant. The leaves are of medium size, leaf blades typically 15 cm long and 9 cm wide. Leaf petioles are about 6 cm long, dark red on the top and under surfaces. The upper leaf surface is glabrous and the under surface is finely pubescent.

Leaf shape.—Typical leaves are ovate with obtuse bases and acuminate tips. Leaf margins are mostly entire.

Color.—Upper side — Dark green, much darker than R.H.S. 147A. Underside — Green, lighter than R.H.S. 147A.

Retention.—The foliage lasts extremely well even under low light intensities in the consumer's home.

Bracts: Generally there are 21–24 dark red bracts of various sizes subtending the cyathia. The primary bracts have blades typically 15 cm long and 9 cm wide with petioles 4 cm long. Petioles on the secondary bracts are 0.5 to 1 cm, resulting in a tight, full center to the bract presentation.

Shape.—Primary bracts are ovate with acute bases and acuminate tips. Primary bract margins are mostly entire and curve downward. Secondary bracts are of various sizes, broadly elliptical, and have acute bases, acuminate tips and entire margins that turn down.

Color.—Upper side — Dark red, R.H.S. 46A-B. Under side — Red, R.H.S. 53B-C.

Flowers: Generally, 14–15 cyathia (flowers) per inflorescence are present when the plant is in full bloom. Each cyathium is about 8 mm long and 7 mm wide, green in color, and fringed with red at the distal end. A yellow nectar cup tinged with red protrudes from the side of each cyathium. The flower pedicel is also green and about 5 mm in length. The stamens protruding from the cyathia are red. The anthers are bifurcate; the pollen is yellow and copious. The stigmas are dark red and trifurcate.

Nectar exudate.—Present.

Seeds.—Self-incompatible.

Fertility.—Not observed.

Post production: Poinsettia '745' is resistant to epinasty after being confined to shipping containers and retains its leaves and flower bracts for several weeks in the consumer's home environment.

Disease resistance: Typical of the species.

What is claimed is:

1. A new and distinct Poinsettia plant, substantially as herein shown and described, distinguished by its dark red flower bracts, dark green foliage, self-branching characteristics and mid-season flowering response.

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