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Fruehwirth

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[54] POINSETTIA PLANT NAMED 'ECKABIA'

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[52] U.S. Cl. Plt./307

[58] Field of Search Plt./307

[56] References Cited

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

P.P. 7,879 6/1992 Fruehwirth Plt./307

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[57] ABSTRACT

Poinsettia 'Eckabia' is a new cultivar, distinguished by bright red, upright flower bracts, dark green foliage, self-branching characteristics and 8½-week flowering response time. The new plant produces a very desirable branched flowering pot plant for the mid-season holiday market. Poinsettia 'Eckabia' is resistant to epinasty after being confined to shipping containers. The post-production foliage and bract retention is 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, 'Eckabia', originated as an induced self-branching sport of a seedling known as "N-33" (not patented) in my greenhouse in Encinitas, Calif. It was selected because of its upright, bright red flower bracts, medium 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, 'Eckabia' was vegetatively reproduced from stem cuttings for test purposes in Encinitas, Calif. "N-33" is a proprietary plant and there are no specimens in the public domain. Poinsettia "N-33" is not self-branching in that no axillary branches develop as long as the apical bud is not removed (pinched). 'Eckabia' is self-branching in that during development axillary branches elongate without removal of the apical bud. If under short day conditions, the axillary branches will develop inflorescences. Poinsettia 'Eckabia' most closely resembles poinsettia '559' (U.S. Plant Pat. No. 8,773), but differs in these aspects: 'Eckabia' has darker green foliage, more rugose flower bracts and an earlier flowering response than '559' under the same cultural conditions. By subjecting clones of this plant to successive generations of vegetative propagation, it was demonstrated that the distinctive characteristics of 'Eckabia' held true from generation to generation.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PHOTOGRAPHS

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

The upper photograph is a side view of a branched plant.

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

DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANT

The following is a detailed description of this 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 'Eckabia' and the plant it most closely resembles, Poinsettia '559' (U.S. Plant Pat. No. 8,773) under the same cultural conditions.

Plant	'Eckabia'	'559'
Leaf color	RHS 139A	RHS 147A
Bract surface	Slightly rugose	Smooth
Flowering response	8½ weeks	9 weeks

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

Classification:

Botanical.—*Euphorbia pulcherrima* Willd.

Common name.—Poinsettia.

Cultivar name.—'Eckabia'.

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 46 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 'Eckabia' 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 8½ weeks under continuous long night conditions and night temperatures of about 16–18° C.

Foliage: The foliage is clean and uniformly dark green from bottom to top of the plant. The leaves are of medium size, leaf blades typically 14 cm long and 11 cm wide with green petioles 6 cm long. The upper leaf surface is glabrous, but slightly rugose and the under surface is finely pubescent.

Leaf shape.—Typical leaves are generally ovate with obtuse to acute bases and acuminate tips. Leaf margins are mostly entire but some with 1 or 2 indentations on each side of the leaf blade.

Color.—Upper side—Dark green, near R.H.S. 139A. Under side—Green, near R.H.S. 147B.

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

Bracts: Generally there are 18–21 upright, bright red bracts of various sizes subtending the cyathia. The primary bracts have blades typically 14–15 cm long and 10 cm wide with petioles 3–4 cm long, reddish on top and greenish on the under side.

Shape.—Primary bracts are ovate with acute bases and acuminate tips. Primary bract margins are entire. Secondary bracts are of various sizes, obovate to broadly elliptical, and have entire margins.

Color.—Upper side — Bright red, R.H.S. 45A–B. Under side — Red, R.H.S. 45C–D.

Flowers: Generally, 10–12 cyathia (flowers) per inflorescence are present when the plant is in full bloom. Each cyathium is about 7 mm long and 6 mm wide, green in color, and fringed light red at the distal end. One or sometimes two yellow nectar cups protrude 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.—Some.

Seeds.—Self-incompatible.

Fertility.—Not observed.

Post production: Poinsettia 'Eckabia' 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 upright, bright red flower bracts, dark green foliage, self-branching characteristics and mid-season flowering response.

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