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Fruehwirth

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(54) **POINSETTIA PLANT NAMED 'ECKAIDEN'**

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(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

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(58) **Field of Search** Plt./303

(56) **References Cited**

PUBLICATIONS

UPOV–ROM GTITM Computer Database 2000/04, GTI Jouve Retrieval Software, citation for 'Eckaiden', Jun. 1999.*

* cited by examiner

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A new and distinct cultivar of Poinsettia plant named 'Eckaiden', characterized by its unique light yellow and pink variegated bracts that are held somewhat erect; dark green leaves; upright and compact plant habit; freely branching habit; early flowering, response time about 8 weeks; and excellent postproduction longevity.

2 Drawing Sheets

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a new and distinct cultivar of Poinsettia plant, botanically known as *Euphorbia pulcherrima* Willd., and hereinafter referred to by the name 'Eckaiden'.

The new Poinsettia is a product of a mutation induction breeding program conducted by the Inventor in Encinitas, Calif. The objective of the Inventor's Poinsettia development program is to create new Poinsettia cultivars having interesting bract and leaf display, desirable bract and foliage color and form, strong and freely branching stems and good post-production longevity.

The new Poinsettia originated by exposing unrooted cuttings of the *Euphorbia pulcherrima* Willd. cultivar 'Eckabri', U.S. Plant Patent application Ser. No. 09/345,567, to gamma-ray radiation at a level of 3,000 rads. The new Poinsettia was discovered and selected by the Inventor in February, 1998. The selection of this plant was based on its unique variegated bract color.

Asexual reproduction of the new Poinsettia by terminal cuttings taken at Encinitas, Calif., has shown that the unique features of this new Poinsettia are stable and reproduced true to type in successive generations of asexual reproduction.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The following traits have been repeatedly observed and are determined to be the unique characteristics of 'Eckaiden'. These characteristics in combination distinguish 'Eckaiden' as a new and distinct cultivar:

1. Unique light yellow and pink variegated bracts that are held somewhat erect.
2. Dark green leaves.
3. Upright and compact plant habit.
4. Freely branching habit.
5. Early flowering, response time about 8 weeks.
6. Excellent postproduction longevity.

In side-by-side comparisons conducted by the Inventor in Encinitas, Calif., plants of the new Poinsettia differed from plants of the parent selection 'Eckabri', primarily in bract coloration as bracts of plants of 'Eckabri' are solid pink and not variegated.

Plants of the new Poinsettia can also be compared to plants of the cultivar 'Pepride', disclosed in U.S. Plant Pat. No. 10,183. However, in side-by-side comparisons conducted in Encinitas, Calif., plants of the new Poinsettia differed from plants of 'Pepride' primarily in bract coloration as bracts of plants of 'Pepride' are solid bright red.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PHOTOGRAPHS

The accompanying colored photographs illustrate the overall appearance of the new Poinsettia, showing the colors as true as it is reasonably possible to obtain in colored reproductions of this type.

The photograph on the first sheet comprises a side perspective view of a typical plant of 'Eckaiden'.

The photograph at the top of the second sheet comprises a top perspective view of a typical plant of 'Eckaiden'.

The photograph at the bottom of the second sheet is a close-up view of typical bracts and leaves of 'Eckaiden' (left) and 'Pepride' (right). Foliage and brack colors in the photographs may differ from the actual colors due to light reflectance.

DETAILED BOTANICAL DESCRIPTION

The new Poinsettia has not been observed under all possible environmental conditions. The phenotype may vary somewhat with variations in environment such as temperature, daylength and light intensity, without, however, any variance in genotype. The following observations and measurements describe plants grown in Encinitas, Calif., under commercial practice in a polyethylene-covered greenhouse with day temperatures about 22 to 24° C., night temperatures about 16 to 18° C., and light levels about 4,000

foot-candles. Plants were grown in 16.5-cm pots, pinched one time, and flowered under naturally lengthening nights during the fall/early winter.

In the following description, color references are made to The Royal Horticultural Society Colour Chart except where general terms of ordinary dictionary significance are used.

Botanical classification: *Euphorbia pulcherrima* Willd. 'Eckaiden'.

Parentage: Induced mutation of *Euphorbia pulcherrima* Willd. 'Eckabri', disclosed in U.S. Plant Patent application Ser. No. 09/345,567.

Propagation:

Type cutting.—Terminal cuttings.

Time to initiate roots.—Summer: About 7 days at 24° C. Winter: About 10 days at 22° C.

Time to develop roots.—Summer: About 26 days at 24° C. Winter: About 26 days at 22° C.

Rooting habit.—Thick, freely branching, becoming fibrous with development.

Plant description:

Plant form.—Inverted triangle; rounded canopy.

Growth habit.—Upright, compact. Freely branching. Branching is enhanced by removing the shoot apex.

Plant vigor.—Moderate.

Plant height.—About 25 cm.

Crop time.—From unrooted cuttings to a flowering plant in a 16.5-cm container, about 16 weeks are required.

Stem description.—Number of lateral branches: About six lateral branches are formed after removal of the terminal apex. Lateral branch length: About 12 cm. Internode length: About 1.1 cm. Stem color: 146A.

Foliage description.—Quantity of leaves per lateral branch: About 7 Length: About 9.75 cm. Width: About 8.25 cm. Shape: Ovate with irregular pointed lobes. Apex: Acuminate. Base: Acute. Margin: Entire. Texture: Smooth. Mostly glabrous with very slight pubescence on lower surface. Color: Young foliage, upper surface: Darker than 137A. Young foliage, lower surface: 137B. Mature foliage, upper surface: Darker than 147A. Mature foliage, lower surface: 147A. Venation, upper surface: 146B. Venation, lower surface: 147C. Petiole: Length: About 4.5 cm. Diameter: About 2 mm. Color: 146D.

Inflorescence description:

Inflorescence type and habit.—Inflorescences are compound corymbs of cyathia with colored flower bracts subtending the cyathia.

Natural flowering season.—Autumn/winter in Northern Hemisphere. Flower initiation and development can be induced under long night conditions. Early flowering, response time is about 8 weeks.

Quantity of inflorescences.—One per lateral branch, usually about six per plant.

Inflorescence size including bracts.—Diameter: About 21 cm. Height (depth): About 5 cm.

Flower bracts.—Quantity of flower bracts per inflorescence: Usually about 10 primary bracts and about 6 smaller secondary bracts per inflorescence. Length, largest bracts: About 10 cm. Width, largest bracts: About 9.3 cm. Shape: Mostly ovate or with irregular pointed lobes. Apex: Acuminate. Base: Acute. Margin: Entire. Texture: Smooth. Aspect: Somewhat erect. Color: Pink centers surrounded by light yellow margins; irregular variegation pattern. Developing, upper surface: Center, 54B; Margin, 11C. Developing, lower surface: Center, 54B to 54C; margin, 11C. Mature, upper surface: Center, 54C; margin, 11C. Mature, lower surface: Center, 54D; margin, 11C.

Cyathia.—Quantity: Usually about 13 per corymb. Diameter of cyathia cluster: Very tight, about 1.5 by 2 cm. Length: About 6 mm. Width: About 4 mm. Color: Immature: 144B. Mature: 144A. Peduncle: Length: About 2.5 mm. Aspect: Strong, erect. Color: 144C. Stamens: Stamen number: Very numerous, typically more than 20 per cyathium. Anther shape: Oval. Anther size: Less than 1 mm. Amount of pollen: Scarce. Pistils: No pistillate flowers observed. Nectary color: 21A.

Disease resistance: Plants of the new Poinsettia have been observed to be resistant to Botrytis.

Postproduction longevity: Excellent; typically plants of the new Poinsettia maintain good substance and bract color for about eight weeks under interior conditions.

It is claimed:

1. A new and distinct cultivar of Poinsettia plant named 'Eckaiden', as illustrated and described.

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