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Fruehwirth

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(54) **POINSETTIA PLANT NAMED ‘ECKADONIA’**
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A new and distinct cultivar of Poinsettia plant named ‘Eckadonia’, characterized by its large inflorescences with recurved pink and light pink bi-colored flower bracts; dark green-colored recurved leaves with green-colored petioles; compact, uniform and upright plant habit; freely branching habit; natural season flower maturity date is December 7 for plants grown in Encinitas, Calif.; response time, about 10 weeks; and excellent post-production longevity.

2 Drawing Sheets

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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 ‘Eckadonia’.

The new Poinsettia a product of a planned breeding program conducted by the Inventor in Encinitas, Calif. The objective of the breeding program is to create new Poinsettia cultivars having flower bracts with desirable colors, uniform plant habit and excellent post-production longevity.

The new Poinsettia originated from a cross made by the Inventor of a proprietary Poinsettia selection identified as code number P-30, not patented, as the female, or seed, parent, with a proprietary Poinsettia selection identified as F-29, not patented, as the male, or pollen, parent. The cultivar Eckadonia was discovered and selected by the Inventor as a flowering plant within the progeny of the stated cross in a controlled environment in Encinitas, Calif., in 1997. The selection of this plant was based on its inflorescence form, attractive flower bract colors and good plant form and substance.

Asexual reproduction of the new Poinsettia by terminal cuttings taken at Encinitas, Calif., since 1997, 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 ‘Eckadonia’. These characteristics in combination distinguish ‘Eckadonia’ as a new and distinct cultivar:

1. Large inflorescences with recurved pink and light pink bi-colored flower bracts.
2. Dark green-colored recurved leaves with green-colored petioles.
3. Uniform and upright plant habit.
4. Freely branching habit.
5. Natural season flower maturity date is December 7 for plants grown in Encinitas, Calif.; response time, about 10 weeks.

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6. Excellent post-production longevity.

Compared to plants of the female parent, the selection P-30, plants of the new Poinsettia are taller and differ in flower bract color as flower bracts of plants of the selection P-30 are white in color. Plants of the new Poinsettia differ from plants of the male parent, the selection F-29, primarily in flower bract color as plants of the male parent have pink-colored flower bracts.

Plants of the new Poinsettia can be compared to plants of the Poinsettia cultivar Windark, disclosed in U.S. Plant patent application Ser. No. 09/087,917. In side-by-side comparisons conducted in Encinitas, Calif., plants of the new Poinsettia differed from plants of the cultivar Windark in the following characteristics:

1. Plants of the new Poinsettia have larger and lighter green leaves than plants of the cultivar Windark.
2. Plants of the new Poinsettia have larger flower bracts than plants of the cultivar Windark.
3. Plants of the new Poinsettia have pink and light pink bi-colored flower bracts whereas plants of the cultivar Windark have red-colored flower bracts.
4. Inflorescences of plants of the new Poinsettia are larger and not as spherical as inflorescences of plants of the cultivar Windark.

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. Colors in the photographs may differ slightly from the color values cited in the detailed botanical description which accurately describe the colors of the new Poinsettia.

The photograph on the first sheet comprises a side perspective view of a typical plant of ‘Eckadonia’.

The photograph at the top of the second sheet comprises a top perspective view of a typical plant of ‘Eckadonia’.

The photograph at the bottom of the second sheet is a close-up view of typical leaves and flower bracts of ‘Eckadonia’ (top) and ‘Windark’ (bottom). Plants used in the photographs were about 19 weeks old.

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 glass-covered greenhouse with day temperatures about 24° C., night temperatures about 19° C., and light levels about 4,000 foot-candles. Single plants were grown in 16.5-cm pots, pinched one time, and flowered under naturally lengthening nyctoperiods during the fall. Plants used for the description were about 19 weeks old.

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. cultivar Eckadonia.

Parentage:

Female parent.—Proprietary *Poinsettia pulcherrima* Willd. selection identified as P-30, not patented.

Male parent.—Proprietary *Poinsettia pulcherrima* Willd. selection identified as F-29, not patented.

Propagation:

Type cutting.—Terminal cuttings.

Time to initiate roots.—About 10 days at 20 to 22° C.

Time to develop roots.—About 28 days at 20 to 22° C.

Rooting habit.—Thick, fibrous and freely-branching.

Plant description:

Plant form.—Inverted triangle, top of plant rounded; mounding.

Growth habit.—Upright and uniform plant habit.

Upright branch angle. Freely branching; branching is enhanced by removing the shoot apex; about 5 to 6 lateral branches develop after removal of the terminal apex. Moderately vigorous.

Plant height.—About 30 cm.

Plant diameter or spread.—About 42 cm.

Crop time.—From unrooted cuttings to a flowering plant in a 16.5-cm container, about 19 weeks are required.

Stem description.—Lateral branch length: About 23 cm. Lateral branch diameter: About 1.1 cm. Internode length: About 2.25 cm. Stem color: 144A.

Foliage description.—Alternate, simple. Quantity of leaves per lateral branch: About 12 to 14. Length: About 13 cm. Width: About 10 cm. Shape: Mostly ovate; lobed. Apex: Acuminate. Base: Acute. Margin: Entire. Texture: Mostly glabrous with very slight pubescence on lower surface. Surface: Smooth, slightly rugose; recurved. Color: Young foliage, upper surface: 147A. Young foliage, lower surface:

147B. Mature foliage, upper surface: 147A; venation, 145A. Mature foliage, lower surface: 147B to 147C; venation, 145C. Petiole: Length: About 3 cm. Diameter: About 4 mm. Color: 145B.

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 nyctoperiod conditions. Response time, about 10 weeks; natural season flower maturity date is December 7 for plants grown in Encinitas, Calif.

Post-production longevity.—Plants of the new Poinsettia maintain good substance and bract color for about 4 to 6 weeks under interior conditions and for about 8 weeks under greenhouse conditions.

Quantity of inflorescences.—One per lateral branch, usually about 5 or 6 per plant.

Inflorescence size.—Diameter: About 19 cm. Height (depth): About 8.75 cm.

Flower bracts.—Quantity of flower bracts per inflorescence: Usually about 24 bracts per inflorescence. Length, largest bracts: About 14.5 cm; stalk about 1 cm. Width, largest bracts: About 9.5 cm. Shape: Mostly ovate. Apex: Acuminate. Base: Acute. Margin: Entire. Texture: Glabrous, velvety. Surface: Smooth, rugose, appears ruffled. Orientation: Recurved; inflorescences pinwheel-shaped. Color: Developing, upper surface: Ground color, 36A, with random tiny flecks of 50B to 50C. Developing, lower surface: 36C to 36D. Mature, upper surface: Ground color, 37C, with random flecks of 51A; ground color fades to 36B with subsequent development. Mature, lower surface: Ground color, 37D, with random flecks of 50B to 50C.

Cyathia.—Quantity: Usually about 10 per corymb. Diameter of cyathia cluster: About 2 by 2.5 cm. Length: About 1.2 cm. Width: About 8 mm. Shape: Ovate. Color: Immature and mature, 145A. Peduncle: Length: About 3 mm. Aspect: Strong, erect. Color: 145A. Stamens: Stamen number: At least 20 per cyathium. Anther shape: Oval. Anther length: About 1 mm. Anther color: 10A. Amount of pollen: Moderate. Pollen color: 9A. Pistils: Not observed. Nectary number: One per cyathia. Nectary color: 9A.

Disease resistance: Resistance to pathogens common to Poinsettias has not been observed on plants grown under commercial conditions.

It is claimed:

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

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