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Fruehwirth

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

A new and distinct cultivar of Poinsettia plant named ‘Eckadire’, characterized by its large inflorescences with dark red-colored flower bracts; dark green-colored leaves with burgundy-colored petioles; uniform and upright plant habit; freely branching habit with strong lateral stems; natural season flower maturity date is December 2 for plants grown in Encinitas, Calif.; response time, about 9.5 weeks; and excellent post-production 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 ‘Eckadire’.

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 N59, not patented, as the female, or seed, parent, with a proprietary Poinsettia selection identified as N33, not patented, as the male, or pollen, parent. The cultivar Eckadire 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 December, 1998. The selection of this plant was based on its attractive flower bract colors and good plant form and substance.

Asexual reproduction of the new Poinsettia by terminal cuttings taken at Encinitas, Calif., since 1999, 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 ‘Eckadire’. These characteristics in combination distinguish ‘Eckadire’ as a new and distinct cultivar:

1. Large inflorescences with dark red-colored flower bracts.
2. Dark green-colored leaves with burgundy-colored petioles.
3. Uniform and upright plant habit.
4. Freely branching habit with strong lateral stems.
5. Natural season flower maturity date is December 2 for plants grown in Encinitas, Calif.; response time, about 9.5 weeks.
6. Excellent post-production longevity.

Compared to plants of the female parent, the cultivar N59, plants of the new Poinsettia are more compact and flower earlier. Compared to plants of the male parent, the selection N33, plants of the new Poinsettia have darker green leaves, darker red flower bracts, and flower earlier.

Plants of the new Poinsettia can be compared to plants of the Poinsettia cultivar 490, disclosed in U.S. Plant Pat. No. 7,825. In side-by-side comparisons conducted in Encinitas, Calif., plants of the new Poinsettia differed from plants of the cultivar 490 in the following characteristics:

1. Plants of the new Poinsettia are taller and more upright than plants of the cultivar 490.
2. Plants of the new Poinsettia have stronger lateral stems than plants of the cultivar 490.
3. Plants of the new Poinsettia have smaller and darker green leaves than plants of the cultivar 490. In addition, leaves of the new Poinsettia have more rounded lobes than leaves of the cultivar 490.
4. Plants of the new Poinsettia have smaller and tighter cyathia clusters than plants of the cultivar 490.

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 ‘Eckadire’.

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

The photograph at the bottom of the second sheet is a close-up view of typical leaves and flower bracts of ‘Eckadire’ (top) and ‘490’ (bottom). Plants used in the photographs were about 18.5 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 18.5 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 Eckadire.

Parentage:

Female parent.—Proprietary *Poinsettia pulcherrima* Willd. selection identified as N59, not patented.

Male parent.—Proprietary *Poinsettia pulcherrima* Willd. selection identified as N33, 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; strong lateral stems. Freely branching; branching is enhanced by removing the shoot apex; about 7 lateral branches develop after removal of the terminal apex. Vigorous.

Plant height.—About 31 cm.

Plant diameter or spread.—About 55 cm.

Crop time.—From unrooted cuttings to a flowering plant in a 16.5-cm container, about 18.5 weeks are required.

Stem description.—Lateral branch length: About 28 cm. Lateral branch diameter: About 1.4 cm. Internode length: About 3.25 cm. Stem color: 148A.

Foliage description.—Alternate, simple. Quantity of leaves per lateral branch: About 8. Length: About 12 cm. Width: About 8 cm. Shape: Roughly ovate with shallow rounded lobes. Apex: Acuminate. Base: Mostly acute. Margin: Entire. Texture: Mostly glabrous with very slight pubescence on lower surface. Surface: Smooth, not rugose. Color: Young foliage, upper surface: Darker than 147A. Young foliage, lower surface: 137A. Mature foliage, upper surface: Much darker than 147A; midrib, 59C, lateral veins, 137C. Mature foliage, lower surface: 137A; midrib,

59B, lateral veins, 137D. Petiole: Length: About 6.5 cm. Diameter: About 3 mm. Color: 59A.

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 9.5 weeks; natural season flower maturity date is December 2 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 7 per plant.

Inflorescence size.—Diameter: About 30 cm. Height (depth): About 5.5 cm.

Flower bracts.—Quantity of flower bracts per inflorescence: Usually about 14 primary bracts and about 5 to 6 smaller secondary bracts per inflorescence. Length, largest bracts: About 15.5 cm; stalk, about 4.5 cm. Width, largest bracts: About 11 cm. Shape: Mostly ovate; occasional rounded lobes. Apex: Acuminate. Base: Rounded to acute. Margin: Entire. Texture: Glabrous, velvety. Surface: Initially slightly rugose, then smooth, not rugose. Orientation: Initially upright, then horizontal to slightly reflexed. Color: Developing, upper surface: Brighter than 46A. Developing, lower surface: 45A. Mature, upper surface: Brighter red than 46A; color does not fade with subsequent development. Mature, lower surface: 53D.

Cyathia.—Quantity: Usually about 5 to 9 per corymb. Diameter of cyathia cluster: About 2 by 2.5 cm. Length: About 1 cm. Width: About 5 mm. Shape: Ovate. Color: Immature: 144A. Mature: 144A to 144B. Peduncle: Length: About 4 mm. Aspect: Strong, erect. Color: 144B. Stamens: Stamen number: Typically about 15 per cyathium. Anther shape: Oval. Anther length: About 1 mm. Anther color: 46A. Amount of pollen: Scarce. Pollen color: 12A. Pistils: Not observed. Nectary number: One or two per cyathia. Nectary color: 24A.

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 'Eckadire', as illustrated and described.

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