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(54) **POINSETTIA PLANT NAMED ‘ECKANEZKA’**

(50) Latin Name: *Euphorbia pulcherrima*
Varietal Denomination: **Eckanezka**

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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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(52) **U.S. Cl.** **Plt./307**

(58) **Field of Classification Search** **Plt./307**
See application file for complete search history.

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A new and distinct cultivar of Poinsettia plant named ‘Eckanezka’, characterized by its uniform, upright, outwardly spreading and mounded plant habit; vigorous growth habit; freely branching habit; dark green-colored leaves; early season flowering response; inflorescences with dark red-colored flower bracts; and excellent post-production longevity.

1 Drawing Sheet

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Botanical designation: *Euphorbia pulcherrima*.
Cultivar denomination: ‘Eckanezka’.

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 ‘Eckanezka’.

The new Poinsettia is 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 is a naturally-occurring branch mutation of the *Euphorbia pulcherrima* Willd. cultivar Eckadire, disclosed in U.S. Plant Pat. No. 12,846. The cultivar Eckanezka was discovered and selected by the Inventor on a single plant of ‘Eckadire’ in a controlled environment in Encinitas, Calif. on Jan. 11, 2002.

Asexual reproduction of the new Poinsettia by terminal vegetative cuttings in a controlled environment in Encinitas, Calif. since April, 2002, has shown that the unique features of this new Poinsettia are stable and reproduced true to type in successive generations of asexual reproduction.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The cultivar Eckanezka 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 traits have been repeatedly observed and are determined to be the unique characteristics of ‘Eckanezka’. These characteristics in combination distinguish ‘Eckanezka’ as a new and distinct cultivar of Poinsettia:

1. Uniform, upright, outwardly spreading and mounded plant habit.
2. Vigorous growth habit.
3. Freely branching habit.

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4. Dark green-colored leaves.

5. Early season flowering response; under natural season conditions, plants flower in about eight weeks in Encinitas, Calif.

6. Inflorescences with dark red-colored flower bracts.

7. Excellent post-production longevity.

In side-by-side comparisons conducted in Encinitas, Calif., plants of the new Poinsettia differed from plants of the parent, the cultivar Eckadire, primarily in time to flower as plants of the new Poinsettia flower about two weeks earlier than plants of the cultivar Eckadire.

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 had thicker and stronger lateral branches than plants of the cultivar 490.
2. Plants of the new Poinsettia flowered a few days later than plants of the cultivar 490 under natural season conditions.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PHOTOGRAPHS

The accompanying photographs illustrate the overall appearance of the new Poinsettia. These photographs show 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 at the bottom of sheet comprises a side perspective view of a typical flowering plant of ‘Eckanezka’ grown in a container.

The photograph at the top of the sheet is a close-up view of typical inflorescences of ‘Eckanezka’.

DETAILED BOTANICAL DESCRIPTION

In the following description, color references are made to The Royal Horticultural Society Colour Chart, 1995 Edition,

except where general terms of ordinary dictionary significance are used. Plants used in the aforementioned photographs and the following observations and measurements describe plants grown in Encinitas, Calif. during the winter in a polyethylene-covered greenhouse and under conditions and practices which approximate those generally used in commercial Poinsettia production. During the production of the plants, day temperatures averaged 24° C., night averaged 19° C. and light levels were about 4,000 foot-candles. Measurements and numerical values represent averages for typical flowering plants. Single plants were grown in 16.5-cm pots and pinched one time. Plants were about 23 weeks old when the photographs and the detailed description were taken.

Botanical classification: *Euphorbia pulcherrima* cultivar Eckanezka.

Parentage: Naturally-occurring branch mutation of the *Euphorbia pulcherrima* Willd. cultivar Eckadire, disclosed in U.S. Plant Pat. No. 12,846.

Propagation:

Type.—Terminal vegetative cuttings.

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

Time to produce a rooted young plant.—About four weeks at 20° C. to 22° C.

Root description.—Fibrous; white in color.

Plant description:

Plant habit and form.—Uniform, upright, outwardly spreading and mounded plant habit; inverted triangle. Inflorescences positioned above the foliar plane. Vigorous growth habit.

Plant height.—About 37 cm.

Plant diameter or spread.—About 45 cm.

Lateral branch description.—Quantity: Freely branching habit, about eight lateral branches develop after pinching. Length: About 27 cm. Diameter: About 6 mm; thick. Internode length: About 2.5 cm. Strength: Strong. Texture: Smooth, glabrous. Color: 146A.

Foliage description.—Arrangement: Alternate; simple. Length: About 12.2 cm. Width: About 8.5 cm. Shape: Elliptical; occasionally lobed towards the leaf base. Apex: Acuminate. Base: Obtuse. Margin: Entire; occasionally lobed. Venation pattern: Pinnate. Texture, upper surface: Smooth, glabrous. Texture, lower surface: Minute pubescence. Surface: Rugose. Color: Developing and fully expanded foliage, upper surface: Darker than 147A; venation, 147B. Developing and fully expanded foliage, lower surface: 147A; venation, 147B. Petiole: Length: About 6.4 cm. Diameter: About 3 mm. Texture, upper and lower surfaces: Smooth, glabrous. Color, upper and lower surfaces: 183A.

Inflorescence description:

Inflorescence type and habit.—Inflorescences are compound corymbs of cyathia with colored flower bracts subtending the cyathia. One inflorescence per lateral branch. Flowers are not fragrant. Flowers persistent. Inflorescences positioned above the foliage.

Natural flowering season.—Autumn/winter; inflorescence initiation and development is induced under long nyctoperiod conditions. Early season flowering; response time, about eight weeks under natural season conditions in Encinitas, Calif.

Post-production longevity.—Excellent post-production longevity; plants of the new Poinsettia maintain good substance and bract color for about four weeks under interior conditions.

Inflorescence size.—Diameter: About 31 cm. Height (depth): About 8 cm.

Flower bracts.—Quantity per inflorescence: About 22. Length, largest bracts: About 13 cm. Width, largest bracts: About 7.6 cm. Shape: Elliptic; occasionally with shallow lobes. Apex: Acuminate. Base: Cuneate. Margin: Entire; occasionally lobed. Texture, upper and lower surfaces: Smooth, glabrous. Aspect: About 30° from horizontal. Venation pattern: Pinnate. Color: Developing or transitional bracts and fully expanded bracts, upper surface: 46A; venation, close to 46A. Developing or transitional bracts and fully expanded bracts, lower surface: 53B; venation, close to 53B. Bract petiole: Length: About 2.3 cm. Diameter: About 2 mm. Texture, upper and lower surfaces: Smooth, glabrous. Color, upper and lower surfaces: 46A.

Cyathia.—Quantity per corymb: About ten. Diameter of cyathia cluster: About 3 cm by 3.5 cm. Length: About 1.2 cm. Width: About 5 mm. Shape: Ovoid. Color, immature: 145A. Color, mature: 146B. Nectaries: Quantity per cyathium: About one or two. Size: About 2 mm by 4 mm. Color: 21A.

Peduncles.—Length: About 2 mm. Diameter: About 2 mm. Strength: Strong. Aspect: Upright. Texture: Smooth, glabrous. Color: 145A.

Reproductive organs.—Stamens: Quantity per cyathium: About ten. Anther shape: Oval; bi-lobed. Anther length: Less than 1 mm. Anther color: 187B. Amount of pollen: Scarce. Pollen color: 16A. Pistils: Not observed. Seed/fruit: Seed and fruit production has not been observed.

Disease/pest resistance: Plants of the new Poinsettia have not been shown to be resistant to pathogens and pests common to Poinsettias.

Temperature tolerance: Plants of the new Poinsettia have been observed to tolerate temperatures ranging from about 15° C. to about 30° C.

It is claimed:

1. A new and distinct Poinsettia plant named 'Eckanezka' as illustrated and described.

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