

Christmas Cactus Care and Information

From Chad Perkins as presented at M.G. meeting 12-5-14



Scientific Name: *Schlumbergera bridgesii* (Christmas Cactus)

Schlumbergera truncate (Thanksgiving Cactus)

Rhipsalidopsis gaetneri (Easter Cactus)

Origin: *Schlumbergera's* – Tropical Forests of Brazil

Rhipsalidopsis – Natural Forests of Brazil

Colors: Flower colors range from yellow, salmon, pink, fuchsia, white, or a combination of the above.

Light: While the Christmas Cactus can adapt to low light, more abundant blooms are produced on plants that are exposed to higher light levels. For indoor locations, place your plant in full exposure for North and East exposures or behind a curtain for South and West exposures (curtain is not needed during the winter months). For outdoor locations, place your plant in a bright indirect location.

Soil: Use a commercial Cactus / Succulent Potting Mix. If you wish to make your own mix use 45% Garden Loam, 45% Course sand, 10% Composted Manure.

Water: Christmas Cactus are NOT true cactus. They are not as drought tolerant as the name infers. However, they are succulent plants and can store a reasonable amount of moisture in their leaves.

Summer: Keep continuously moist not wet

October: NO Water. Keep in humid location or mist.

November: Cautiously resume watering (keep on dry side). Do not let stems get flabby from overwatering. This is a sign of root and/or stem rot.

After Blooming: Let plant rest by withholding water for 6 weeks.

New Growth Starts: Repot and resume watering.

Fertilizing: Use a weak solution of House Plant or All Purpose Plant foods. Use a teaspoon per gallon rate for most plant foods. Check label for manufacturer recommendations.

Temperature: From October till end of blooming, keep nights cool (50F – 65F). Plants will not bloom if temperatures are too warm at night.

Bud Dropping: Common causes of bud dropping are over watering, exposure to cold drafts, too close to heat vents/wood stoves, or lack of potash in the soil.