



## Christmas Cactus

Are you looking for a unique houseplant to brighten up the holidays? Try a Christmas Cactus from Johnson's Garden Centers. Each thornless plant has striking, arched branches with smooth stem segments. When flowering, the Christmas Cactus is covered with exotic 2-3" blooms in colors of red, white, peach, lavender, gold, orange and more.



*Christmas Cactus blooms with exotic flowers at the end of striking arched branches.*

Christmas Cactus requires minimal care. It prefers normal household temperatures and plenty of bright, indirect light. Too much direct sunlight will burn the leaves. The soil should be constantly moist but not waterlogged.

The plant's natural bloom cycle will end in early spring, but continue to keep your plant moist and start fertilizing every two weeks with ferti•lome Geranium, Hanging Basket and Pansy Food (20-20-20). In the fall, discontinue the fertilizer and cut back on the watering in order to encourage flower bud formation. Just be careful that the plant's stems don't shrivel from lack of moisture.

Although these plants flower best if kept a little potbound, flowers will decrease if the plant is too crowded. If you notice a decrease in flowering, move the plant to a slightly larger pot in the spring.

If possible, move the plants to a shady location outdoors for the summer. Do not place the plant in full sun to avoid burning the leaves. Leave your plant outside until frost threatens. By that time, the plant will have received enough cool Kansas nights in the 50-55° range to set on flower buds.

If you can't summer the plant outdoors (or it needs to come in before forming buds), keep the plant indoors out of direct light until fall and then move it to an out-of-the-way room covered by a cardboard box or cloth. To set buds you will need to provide 12-14 hours of complete dark for 25 consecutive nights, or until you see buds forming. Keep temperatures between 59-69°.

After the flower buds have formed, it takes an additional 9 to 10 weeks for flowers to complete development and bloom.

When the flowers are spent, it's time to resume the normal watering and feeding schedule. To help your Christmas Cactus bloom again for the holidays next year, keep the soil evenly moist and fertilize every two weeks with ferti•lome Geranium, Hanging Basket and Pansy Food until it's time to encourage flower bud formation again in the fall.

*Revised 11/14*