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The favourite Christmas plant 2019 is ... the Poinsettia

Following in the footsteps of the favourite Office Plant of the Year, we organised a competition to find the favourite Christmas plant. A selection of five flowering winter plants made the short list, namely the Poinsettia, the Cyclamen, the Christmas Cactus (*Schlumbergera*), the Azalea and the Amaryllis (*Hippeastrum*).

The final decision was left to our panel of judges whose votes registered the top three in this order:

- Poinsettia
- Amaryllis
- Christmas cactus

Comments from our judges

Matthew Appleby of Horticulture Week picked the Poinsettia as his top choice as it is 'an iconic Christmas favourite, with new colours and sizes growing the appeal'.

Award-winning garden designer, Claudia de Yong also named the Poinsettia as her favourite: 'I prefer the paler coloured ones. As our homes are warm at this time of year, this plant should be very happy (make sure you protect the plant from the cold when you buy them). They look great as part of the table decoration in large bowls topped by moss.'

This choice was backed up by the team at **Pro Landscaper**.

The Poinsettia was originally recognised for its mass of bright red bracts but now this plant comes in a variety of colours from white and cream through greens to pinks, bronzes and yellows, pinks and of course the original shades of red. This makes the Poinsettia very versatile and perfect for any Christmas theme or scheme.

The Amaryllis got **Rona Wheeldon of Flowerona and Jane Perone's** vote who commented: 'I just love these OTT flower bulbs! So dramatic and easy to grow in the average (warm) British home or office, they offer value for money, gorgeous blooms and really make an impact on a room.'

The Amaryllis is also versatile when it comes to shape and colours, from whites through pinks and red. Each tall stem holds three large flower heads from double flowers to spidery ones.



Coming in third place was the popular Christmas cacti. **Matthew Appleby** confirmed it is a 'retro favourite making a comeback'. While our American judge, **Joe Zazzera from Green Plants for Green Buildings** voted for it as it is a 'hearty beauty'. The Christmas cactus flowers at the end of its long flat leaf-like stems usually from November to January. The colour range is red through pinks to white.

All of the top three plants make good colourful additions to your office or home displays for the Christmas season.

Poinsettia Day

Don't forget that 12 December is Poinsettia Day. I'm sure no one needs an excuse to include these lovely Christmas plants in their displays but December 12th certainly makes it the perfect day to have them on reception displays or to give as presents.

A big thank you our judges

We'd like to thank all of our judges mentioned above for finding the time to make their nominations.

