



Winter Rose Early Red

This cultivar offers options in form and timing.

By Jack Williams

Very few poinsettias have distinctive name recognition to the level of Winter Rose. Since its introduction, this unique cultivar has continued to grow in popularity and help pave the way for other non-traditional colors and forms. But as exciting as some novelties are, they usually are popular for a few years and then drop from favor fast if they do not continually improve, expand in color range and provide growers and retailers the opportunity to improve margins at all levels. The Winter Rose poinsettia has managed to do all this, and more!

The latest improvement in the Winter Rose family is an early-blooming selection. 'Winter Rose Early Red' has the same unique incurved leaves and bracts, dark green foliage and outstanding post-production characteristics of the original selection. But unlike the original, Early Red has an eight-week response and early initiation similar to Freedom, making it possible to offer this popular novelty for early-season sales without black-cloth to manipulate timing.

SCHEDULING

Schedules for this new poinsettia will need to be adjusted to compensate for the earlier initiation (use September 15-20 as the target date). We suggest a 7- to 10-day adjustment in transplant or pinching compared to 'Winter Rose

Dark Red'. Another advantage of the early-flowering characteristic is the impact on bract size. The warmer temperatures and conditions at the time of bract development encourage greater expansion, for larger bracts at the time of sale. The same can be accomplished with the original Winter Rose Dark Red, but it requires warmer temperatures to compensate for the shorter, darker days.

FORMS

Like the original Winter Rose Dark Red, Early Red can be used for specialty products and forms that create higher margins and returns for growers and retailers alike. When used for different-size trees, these poinsettias make outstanding finished plants that sell with little effort. In standard pot sizes and forms, this series can be grown at higher density than other poinsettias, increasing the return per square foot for producers of the crop.

In small pot forms (2¼- to 3-inch miniatures and 4- to 5-inch pinched plants), Winter Rose makes an outstanding product with great durability and ease of growing.

Winter Rose has also expanded beyond the original Dark Red to become a full family of colors that includes White, Deep Pink, Pink and Marble. This greater color range makes it possible for growers to use the series in more product types, color mixes (Red and White;

Pink and Marble; Red, White and Pink tri-colors, etc.) for enhanced interest and sales opportunities.

In addition to these benefits for potted plant production, Winter Rose has also broken new ground as a cut flower. Starting from a different selection of genetics that features taller stems, larger bracts and an absence of small, baby shoots or branches, this new cut flower product is marketed under the name Renaissance. The unique characteristics of this poinsettia make it possible to use Winter Rose to create a new product for use in November/December when demand for cut flowers is great but supply of products that fit the holiday theme are limited.

If given normal care and handling, Renaissance cut flowers last between two and three weeks in an arrangement or vase. Available in Red, White, Pink and Peppermint,

Renaissance stems sell for prices in excess of \$2 per stem, making a return per square foot of approximately \$10. **GPN**

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Why Winter Rose Early Red?

Poinsettias are not known for profit, but they are a must for most of you. So, novelties were created along with high-margin forms, such as trees and cuts. (I love the cuts. I ran around this Christmas searching for the cuts to no avail. Here's a great business opportunity for someone to introduce cut poinsettia to the Chicago market.) The Winter Rose family provides these options.

There's something else. The name says it all — "Early." Winter Rose has been such a big hit, it is nice to see more opportunities for it. Winter Rose Early Red gives you early-season sales — two weeks before other rose-type novelties — while maintaining the look of Winter Rose. And with initiation similar to Freedom, this is a schedule you are accustomed to following. Read more about Winter Rose Early Red and other varieties in our annual Poinsettia Trials coverage starting on page 20. — **Carrie Burns**

