

□ *Christmas Plants
And Customs,
Connected with
Them* □



□ Holly □

- *In many western cultures, holly is a traditional Christmas decoration, used especially in wreaths. The pointed leaves of the Holly represent the thorns of Christ's Crown. The green leaves represent eternal life, and the red berries represent the blood of Christ. It is said that holly was used to make the crown of thorns. At that time the berries were yellow. In honor to the blood shed by Christ the berries turned red. According to another legend, when the Holy Family was fleeing into the desert from Herod, they hid the baby Jesus in a holly bush. At that time, the leaves had fallen as the holly was not an evergreen. Mary prayed for protection and the leaves grew - a deep green to*



□ Holly □



□ *Poinsettia* □

- *Nahuatl, the language of the Aztecs, the plant is called Cuetlaxochitl meaning "skin flower." The Aztecs used the plant to produce red dye and as an antipyretic medication. Today it is known in Mexico and Guatemala as "Noche Buena", meaning Christmas Eve. In Spain it is known as "Flor de Pascua", meaning Easter Flower. In both Chile and Peru, the plant became known as "Crown of the Andes".*
- *The plant's association with Christmas began in 16th century Mexico, where legend tells of a young girl who was too poor to provide a gift for the celebration of Jesus' birthday. The tale goes that the child was inspired by an angel to gather weeds from the roadside and place them in front of the church altar. Crimson "blossoms" sprouted from the weeds and became beautiful poinsettias. From the 17th century, Franciscan friars in Mexico included the plants in their Christmas celebrations.*
- *Poinsettias are popular Christmas decorations in homes,*



□ *Poinsettia* □



□ Ivy □

- Christmas Ivy is a plant of winters that blossoms with its bulky green leaves. It comes into the category of climbers that are strewn with berries mainly in black color.
- Ivy has to cling to something to support itself as it grows. This reminds us that we need to cling to God for support in our lives.
- In Germany, it is traditional that Ivy is only used outside and a piece tied to the outside of a Church was supposed to protect it from lightning! The Ivy of Christmas also holds a special place in the heart of every Christian. It stands for the evergreen happiness at homes and in life. Also lots of superstitions and unreasonable beliefs are attached to them. Some people consider them of having the ability to predict the events that are going to happen in future. Another unreasonable belief related to the Christmas Ivy fascinates lots of women. They think that if they hold the Ivy plant in their hands and praise it, they can



□ Ivy □



□ Mistletoe □

- Mistletoe is a plant that grows on willow and apple trees (and in garden centers!). The practice of hanging it in the house goes back to the times of the ancient Druids. It is supposed to possess mystical powers which bring good luck to the household and ward off evil spirits. It was also used as a sign of love and friendship in Norse mythology and that's where the custom of kissing under Mistletoe comes from.
- When the first Christians came to Western Europe, some tried to ban the use of Mistletoe as a decoration in Churches, but many still continued to use it! York Minster Church in the UK used to hold a special Mistletoe Service in the winter, where wrong doers in the city of York could come and be pardoned.
- According to a custom of Christmas cheer, any two people who meet under a hanging of mistletoe are obliged to kiss. The custom is of Scandinavian origin. The custom of kissing under Mistletoe comes from England! The original custom was that a berry was picked from the sprig of Mistletoe before the person could be kissed and when all the berries had gone, there could be no more kissing!!

□ Mistletoe □

