



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Oct. 10, 2013

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Rel. No. 13-081



Poinsettia Forever Stamps Begin Blooming Today Among Nation's Post Offices *Available in Sheets of 20 or in ATM Booklets of 18 Stamps*

High-resolution image of the stamps are available for media use only by emailing mark.r.saunders@usps.gov.

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Postal Service continues its tradition of issuing classic holiday stamps with this bright and cheerful rendering of America's favorite holiday flower, the poinsettia. The dedication of the Poinsettia Forever stamps took place today in New York City at the [American Stamp Dealers Association](#) stamp show.

Available today in sheets of 20 stamps, customers may purchase the stamps at usps.com/stamps, at 800-STAMP24 (800-782-6724) or at Post Offices nationwide and on eBay at ebay.com/stamps. The Poinsettia stamps are also available at ATMs in booklets of 18 stamps.

"The image of the Poinsettia has proven to be so timeless that the Postal Service has featured it on two previous holiday stamps, one in 1964 and one in 1985," said U.S. Postal Service Stamp Services Director Susan McGowan in dedicating the stamp. "As these stamps begin their journey from Post Offices all across the land, we hope they will extend warm holiday wishes for a peaceful and joyous season."

The stamp art depicts the rich red and vibrant green leaves surrounding the flower — the cluster of small, rather modest cup-shaped structures in the center. The red "petals" that we think of as the flower are actually modified leaves called bracts.

Artist William Low of Huntington, NY, working under the direction of Ethel Kessler of Bethesda, MD, created the digital painting in Photoshop. Using a cordless pen or stylus, he "painted" his brushstrokes on a pressure sensitive screen, adding dabs of color and weaving layers of texture into the painting.

A potted poinsettia served as Low's model. In order to keep the image fresh after the live plant passed its prime, he photographed the flower at its peak, capturing details in close-ups and preserving the perfect

light that accentuated the poinsettia's vivid color.

In addition to red, America's favorite poinsettia color, the modern plants are bred in many hues: pink, apricot, yellow, cream, and white, among others, with some unusual varieties that blend several colors in a speckled or marbled pattern.

Native to Mexico, the poinsettia — its botanical name is *Euphorbia pulcherrima* — is a small tropical tree that can reach heights of more than 10 feet in the wild. The Aztecs revered the poinsettia, which they called *cuetlaxochitl*, as a symbol of purity. They used the bracts to make a reddish-purple dye for textiles and cosmetics and created a medicine from the plant's milky sap that counteracted fever.

Many of this year's other stamps may be viewed on Facebook at facebook.com/USPSStamps, on Twitter [@USPSstamps](https://twitter.com/USPSstamps) or on the website *Beyond the Perf* at beyondtheperf.com/2013-preview. Beyond the Perf is the Postal Service's online site for information on upcoming stamp subjects, first-day-of-issue events and other philatelic news.

First-day-of-issue Postmark

Customers have 60 days to obtain the first-day-of-issue postmark by mail. They may purchase new stamps at local Post Offices, at The Postal Store website at usps.com/shop, or by calling 800-STAMP-24. They should affix the stamps to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes (to themselves or others), and place them in larger envelopes addressed to:

Poinsettia Stamp
Special Events Coordinator
380 W 33rd Street, Rm. 4032
New York, NY 10199-9998

After applying the first-day-of-issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes through the mail. There is no charge for the postmark up to a quantity of 50. For more than 50, the price is 5 cents each. All orders must be postmarked by Dec. 10, 2013.

First-day Covers

The Postal Service also offers first-day covers for new stamp issues and Postal Service stationery items postmarked with the official first-day-of-issue cancellation. Each item has an individual catalog number and is offered in the quarterly *USA Philatelic* catalog, online at usps.com/shop or by calling 800-782-6724. Customers may request a free catalog by calling 800-782-6724 or writing to:

U.S. Postal Service
Catalog Request
PO Box 219014
Kansas City, MO 64121-9014

Related Products

There are eight philatelic products available for this stamp issue:

688606, Press Sheet with Die Cuts, \$73.60 (print quantity of 2,500).
688608, Press Sheet without Die Cuts, \$73.60 (print quantity of 2,500).
688610, Keepsake (Booklet & Digital Color Postmark Set), \$10.95.
688616, First-Day Cover, \$0.90.
688621, Digital Color Postmark, \$1.61.
688630, Ceremony Program \$6.95
586016, ATM First-Day Cover, \$0.90.
586021, ATM Digital Color Postmark, \$1.61.

For a great selection of stamps and related collectible products, please visit the official Postal Service Store on eBay at ebay.com/stamps.

The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.

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For reporters interested in speaking with a regional Postal Service public relations professional, please go to about.usps.com/news/media-contacts/usps-local-media-contacts.pdf.

A self-supporting government enterprise, the U.S. Postal Service is the only delivery service that reaches every address in the nation — 151 million residences, businesses and Post Office™ Boxes. The Postal Service™ receives no tax dollars for operating expenses, and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations. With 32,000 retail locations and the most frequently visited website in the federal government, *usps.com*®, the Postal Service has annual revenue of more than \$65 billion and delivers nearly 40 percent of the world's mail. If it were a private sector company, the U.S. Postal Service would rank 35th in the 2011 Fortune 500. In 2011, Oxford Strategic Consulting ranked the U.S. Postal Service number one in overall service performance of the posts in the top 20 wealthiest nations in the world. *Black Enterprise* and *Hispanic Business* magazines ranked the Postal Service as a leader in workforce diversity. The Postal Service has been named the Most Trusted Government Agency for six years and the sixth Most Trusted Business in the nation by the Ponemon Institute.

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