

## Print a voucher, buy a poinsettia, help support Red Cross' mission

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**POINSETTIA SALES AID RED CROSS** - Seen here, Casey Beneduce is in the midst of some poinsettias which will reach full maturity towards the end of November

AREA — The Colonial Crossroads Chapter of the American Red Cross and the Great Swamp Greenhouses are teaming up for some holiday cheer with a poinsettia sale aimed at raising valuable dollars for the chapter's mission services. When Great Swamp Greenhouse customers present a Red Cross holiday voucher at the time of purchase, the chapter will receive 10% of the proceeds. The holiday vouchers can be printed directly from the chapter's website at [ccnjredcross.org](http://ccnjredcross.org).

Great Swamp Greenhouses owner Michael Beneduce is a third generation grower who

learned the business at his grandfather's farm stand, "Amato's" on Shunpike Road in Madison. Beneduce went through Madison's public school system with Julie Siciliano who is the manager at the Greenhouses and also a board member of the local Red Cross and a member of the Disaster Action Team. "Julie and I have been working together for 30 years and we are very happy to support her efforts on behalf of the Colonial Crossroads Chapter," says Beneduce. "I hope the customers who come to us every holiday for their poinsettias will take a moment to print these holiday vouchers to help this cause."

Beneduce graduated from Madison High School in 1975 and started the Great Swamp Greenhouses when he was 21. The garden center is located in the heart of the Great Swamp National Wildlife

Refuge in Meyersville. There are a multitude of poinsettia colors offered. "The variety of poinsettias has grown dramatically over the years to appeal to all tastes," says Casey Beneduce, Michael's wife. "We start growing the poinsettias around the first of August and they have fully matured by about the third week in November. From mid-September until mid-October, the poinsettias need a full 12 hours of light and 12 hours of dark, which occurs naturally. When we come into the greenhouse in the evening, we bring a flashlight to keep the entire area in darkness," adds Casey.

There are an array of colors, including "jingle bells" poinsettias which have a red and white leaf; "marble" poinsettias with a yellow and pinkish leaf; "freedom" poinsettias which are the traditional red color and then various shades of burgundy, pink and combinations. A Holiday favorite is the hanging basket which can be used as a centerpiece on tables surrounded by an array of pine cones and fresh greens.

Poinsettias are available for purchase right now but are still in the growing stage. With plenty of light, daily watering and limited exposure to the cold, they can be enjoyed in the home as they mature.

To obtain holiday vouchers prior to your poinsettia purchase check the Red Cross website at **ccnjredcross.org** or call Elissa Cordrey at 908-273-2076 to have vouchers mailed directly to your home. Donations received from this program will help support the Colonial Crossroads Chapter's programs and services. This past year our local chapter supported area fires, regional flooding, and international response to Haiti thanks to generous donations from area residents. Currently, our fall solicitation campaign is underway and the chapter asks for your support to help keep its programs in place for the upcoming year.

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