Mistletoe History & Control

Although it has not been pinpointed, the present day use of mistletoe during the holidays is thought to have originated with the English. Mistletoe was hung in doorways, and after each kiss, the couple would pluck a berry from the arrangement until all the berries were gone.

Mistletoe berries are white and form in the winter following a late fall bloom of yellow flowers. The plant is a parasite, meaning it depends on a host for food and water. Mistletoe is spread through various methods including bird droppings and is often too high in trees for practical control.

The only effective control is to remove the infected branch, however, this does not guarantee complete control. Usually, the damage is only cosmetic, but occasionally mistletoe can kill entire branches and in extreme cases, the entire tree.

F.A.Q.

Q: Are poinsettias poisonous?
A: If eaten in very large quantities, the milky sap in poinsettias can cause low toxicity. Abdominal pain with vomiting and diarrhea are common symptoms. Occasional dermatitis can also occur with frequent skin contact.

Create A Kissing Ball

1. Drill a pencil-size hole through the center of a small potato. (*The moisture in the potato will keep your greens fresh longer.*)
2. Run ribbon or string through the hole and secure both ends with a knot.
3. Using even, sharply cut pieces of holly, boxwood, and mistletoe, push all pieces into the potato, covering the potato with a dense wig of greenery.
4. Hang in a doorway and enjoy!

Contact

For more information on these, or any horticulture topics of interest, please contact:

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GARDEN HUMOR

What did the Christmas tree wear to the pool party?
Swim trunks!