

EUPHORBIACEAE

The Poinsettia Family

This is a large family predominately tropical in distribution. The plants usually have simple, alternate leaves with stipules. When they are compound they are always palmate. The flowers are regular, unisexual and usually consist of five perianth parts. Male flowers contain one to many stamens and the female flowers contain a superior ovary formed of 3 fused carpels. Most members of this family contain a milky latex usually poisonous (e.g. the manchineel tree). The genus Euphorbia has a highly specialised inflorescence called a cyathium. Within this cup-shaped structure is found a single female flower, surrounded by several male flowers. Glands are often found around the rim. The rubber tree, cassava and castor oil are the most important crop plants in this family.



Euphorbia hirta

