

Planting and Growing Amaryllis

No other indoor flowering bulb provides such a spectacular display of blooms as the amaryllis - it's no wonder it is so popular.

Amaryllis are prized for their huge 4- to 6-inch wide bold, bell-like flowers on thick, sturdy stalks that are 30-inches high or taller.

Originally from South Africa and South America, today American and Dutch hybrids of amaryllis (*Hippeastrum*) come in white, various shades of red, scarlet, pink, salmon, orange and white marked with red or pink.

Amaryllis is one of the easiest indoor bulbs to grow. They are available to purchase October through December (while supplies last) and can be planted from October until the end of April.

Flowering time begins in early December and can extend through the end of May, depending on when the bulb is planted. Blooms come along rapidly after planting, with some amaryllis bulbs flowering within 21 days after planting. Watching the flower stalks shoot up and the buds expand and open will keep the whole family in suspense.

With proper care and handling, amaryllis bulbs will bloom indoors year after year.

Planting Your New Amaryllis

1. Select a clay or ceramic pot 1½ - 2 inches wider in diameter than the widest part of the bulb and at least as deep. Heavier clay or ceramic pots work best because their weight provides stability, preventing the pot from toppling over from the weight of the flowers. The pot should have a hole in the bottom for good drainage.
2. Place a piece of broken pottery (clay shard) or flat rocks over the drainage hole to prevent the soil from falling out, but allowing water to drain. Fill the pot with a suitable potting mix, such as Shultz's Bulb Potting and Planting Mix or Pro-Mix, that has had a tablespoon of a slow-release fertilizer, such as Electra, mixed into it.
3. Place the amaryllis bulb into the soil, gently spreading the roots so that the top half (pointed end) of the bulb is protruding above the soil and the bottom half is below.
4. Water your bulb thoroughly after potting.

Caring For Your Amaryllis

1. Place your newly-potted amaryllis bulb(s) on a sunny windowsill in a cool room (55-65 F).
2. Water only when the soil feels very dry to touch - keeping the soil too wet might rot the bulb. As the roots grow the frequency of watering should be increased accordingly.
3. Flower buds should emerge in 6-10 weeks, but some varieties or individual bulbs may take longer. Foliage may appear before, during or after flower buds appear, depending on the variety you choose.
4. Once growth begins, rotate the pot regularly to prevent the plant from leaning toward the light.
5. The flower stalk might require staking to hold it upright as it develops.
6. To help the flowers last longer, move the plant out of direct sunlight and keep it in a cool room after the blossoms have opened.

How to Get Your Amaryllis To Bloom Again

1. When the flowers fade cut them from the stem and allow the leaves to grow.
2. Place the amaryllis bulb back in a sunny windowsill.
3. Water regularly as needed and continue to fertilize once a month with a slow release fertilizer, such as Electra.
4. In late summer, gradually reduce watering to trigger dormancy.
5. Cut off all yellow leaves and stop watering altogether in October, allowing the soil to dry completely.
6. Store your bulb in its pot in a cool dry room (40-45 F). Do not water. Let it rest for 4 months.
7. After this 4-month rest period, take the bulb out of the pot, discard the old soil and re-pot the bulb in the same pot with new soil.
8. Follow the same steps outlined in the **Planting Your New Amaryllis Bulb** and **Caring For Your Amaryllis After Planting** sections above.
9. Before you know it, your amaryllis will be in full bloom once again!

Some Tips For Getting The Most From Your Amaryllis Bulbs:

- Choose bulbs that are firm to the touch.
- The larger the bulb the more flowers it will produce. A size 40+ amaryllis bulb (40cm across or larger) can produce 8 or more individual flowers on 2 or more stalks, producing a head of flowers that could be 14 inches or more across!
- Try grouping 3 or more amaryllis bulbs together in a large clay pot for a magnificent display of flowers!
- Plant amaryllis bulbs at intervals of 2 weeks for continuous bloom and spectacular indoor color throughout the winter months.
- Amaryllis bulbs are a great gift for any occasion!

Shopping List

For growing amaryllis bulbs you will need:

- ✓ A clay pot
- ✓ Shultz's **Bulb Potting and Planting Mix** or **Pro-Mix**
- ✓ Stakes & Twine (if necessary)
- ✓ Small watering can
- ✓ **Electra** fertilizer



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