

# Amaryllis

These beautiful tropical bulbs are actually in the family *Hippeastrum*. Flowering in fall or winter, they are often associated with Christmas. Care is easy, even though something this special looks like it should be difficult to grow; read on to see how easy it can be . . . (and we promise we'll let you take all the credit).

## Potting

Of course, our potted Amaryllis are ready to grow, but if you buy just a bulb it will need to be potted. As your Amaryllis will be top-heavy when in full bloom, we recommend using a heavy clay pot, preferably no more than an inch wider all around than the bulb itself. Use a bagged potting soil leaving approximately 1/3 of the bulb showing above the soil level. Water thoroughly, then do not water again until the soil is almost completely dry. (See how to grow Amaryllis in water [below](#))

## Watering

Water your Amaryllis sparingly until the sprout is well out of the bulb. From then on, start watering regularly when the soil is just dry, and within a few weeks you'll have a spectacular floral show in your home. Remember to keep turning the pot regularly to make the stalk grow up straight, as the Amaryllis does have a tendency to lean toward the light. No fertilizer is required at this time.

## Light & Temperature

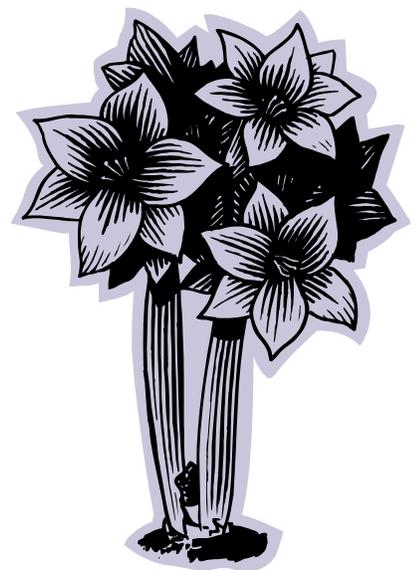
Place your Amaryllis near a sunny window. Amaryllis prefer temperatures in the 65°-80°F range, with temperatures at the warmer end of the range producing fastest growth, and longer-lasting flowers at the cooler end.

## After Care

With a little skill and work, you can keep your Amaryllis alive for another beautiful holiday display next year. (It is definitely easier to buy a new bulb, but for those of you who love a challenge, this is worth trying!)

After the flowers have faded, trim the flower stalk (not the leaves!) back to 3-4". Keep watering the plant and start a feeding program with a liquid plant fertilizer, fertilizing at least once a month. Any fertilizer suitable for houseplants will do. Do not apply fertilizer to dry soil, as this can burn the feeder roots and retard healthy growth. Amaryllis are big eaters, and they must grow a number of leaves during the summer. This growth helps

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# Amaryllis cont.

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them restore their strength for the production of next year's flowers.

After the last danger of frost has passed, you can plant your Amaryllis, pot and all, straight into your garden in a sunny spot. Continue your feeding program, and let leaf growth develop freely. Around September, the leaves should start to yellow, signaling that the plant needs a rest. (If the leaves do not naturally yellow at this time, withhold all water until they yellow and die.) Cut the leaves back to the neck of the bulb, dig up the plant and pot, and store the whole thing in your basement or garage. Store until around December, or until the bulb shows signs of new tip growth. Then go back to the start of this page, and enjoy your Amaryllis all over again!

## Repotting

Your Amaryllis can stay in the same pot for a few years, as long as there is still at least a thumb's-width between the bulb and the pot. Amaryllis don't mind being somewhat pot-bound. Eventually, though, you'll have to repot. It's easiest to do this as you begin to re-grow the bulb after the fall dormancy. Rinse soil completely from the roots, trim off any dead, mushy roots, and repot into a pot one size larger.

## Growing Amaryllis in Water

Amaryllis will grow and bloom in a vase of water with stones or decorative pebbles. To "plant" your bulb, begin by carefully placing your stones or pebbles to a depth of about 4 inches in a wide glass vase, Amaryllis vase, or other water tight container at least 6" deep. With scissors, trim off any roots on the bulb that are brown and dried (they will rot in the water), but let the roots that are whitish and fleshy remain. Place the Amaryllis bulb, roots down, on top of the stones, then put the remaining stones around the bulb, leaving the top third of the bulb exposed. Finally, add water until the level reaches about 1" **below** the base of the bulb but no higher. If the base of the bulb sits in water, it will rot. Check the water level daily. Add water as needed to keep the level just below the base of the bulb.

Amaryllis grown in water may not perform well in subsequent years, so it is recommended that you dispose of the bulb after bloom when grown this way. You may attempt to repot it in soil and grow it on as described above.



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