
Growing Guide Amaryllis (Hippeastrum)

PRE-BLOOM CARE OF AMARYLLIS: Place the pot where the temperature remains above 60°F. The warmer the temperature (70-80°F night and day is ideal), the faster the bulb will sprout and grow. Providing bottom heat (by setting the pot on a propagation mat or on the top of a refrigerator) may help stimulate growth. Water only when the top inch of the potting mix is dry to the touch. Watering more frequently, particularly just after potting, can cause the bulb to rot.

Growth generally begins in 2-8 weeks. Certain varieties of Amaryllis may take more time to sprout. As long as your bulb remains firm, be patient and take care not to overwater. Provide ample sunshine (a south-facing window or a sunroom) as soon as the bulb sprouts. Rotate the pot frequently to prevent the flower stalks from leaning toward the light. The flower stalks may require support to keep from toppling.

REBUILDING THE BULB: After flowering, your bulb is exhausted. If you want flowers next year (many people prefer simply to purchase new bulbs every fall), you must allow it to rebuild itself. After the last bloom fades, cut off the flower stalk 3-5 inches above the bulb, **BUT DO NOT CUT THE LEAVES OFF. THEY PRODUCE FOOD THAT WILL BE STORED IN THE BULB.** Put your plant in a sunny window (a south-facing one is best), water when the top inch of the potting mix is dry to the touch, and begin fertilizing with a balanced, water-soluble fertilizer once a month. When the danger of frost has passed in spring, set the pot outdoors in full sun or knock the bulb out of its pot and plant it in the ground in a sunny location. In fall -- we often wait until frost blackens the leaves -- bring the bulb indoors, cut the foliage off just above the bulb, and store it dry in a cool (55°F), dark place such as a basement for 8-10 weeks. Then pot (or repot) the bulb and water it. Thereafter, keep the potting mix almost dry until new growth emerges.

GROWING AMARYLLIS IN STONES AND WATER: These large bulbs will grow happily and bloom abundantly in nothing more than stones and water. To "plant" your bulb, begin by carefully placing river stones or pebbles to a depth of about 4 inches in our Hurricane Vase or Bulb Vase or your own clear glass planter. With scissors, trim off any roots on the bulb that are brown and dried*, 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 1in below the base of the bulb but no higher. If the base of the bulb sits in water, it will rot.

After planting, set the container on a sunny windowsill in a room where the temperature remains above 60°F. The warmer the temperature (70-80°F night and day is ideal), the faster the bulb will sprout and grow. Check the water level daily. Add water as needed to keep the level below the base of the bulb. A shoot will emerge from the top of the bulb in 2-8 weeks; you may (or may not) see thick white roots pushing between the stones before then. Rotate the container frequently to prevent the flower stalks from leaning toward the light. After the last blooms fade, we recommend that you dispose of the bulb; Amaryllis grown in water may not perform well in subsequent years.