



How to Grow and Care for Amaryllis Bulbs Indoors at Holiday Time

Type: Flowering Bulb

Latin Name: Amarysso, from the family of Amaryllidaceae

Amaryllis bulbs are extremely easy to grow inside, especially for the holidays, when following just a few simple tips. Perhaps that is why so many people enjoy growing them indoors. Typically, Amaryllis kits (boxed kits usually include the bulb, planter, and plant material) are marketed and sold in stores beginning in late fall – just in time to grow for blossoming during the upcoming holiday season.

The word Amaryllis comes from the latin word amarysso which means “to sparkle”. The flower blossoms are brilliant and dramatic and absolutely make a statement in any room they are placed. The bulb will produce one or two stems about 24 inches in height with the lily shaped blossoms occurring at the top of the stem. Common colors of the flower blossoms are crimson red, pink, salmon, white, and a mixture of any of those colors.

Expected growing time from bulb to flowering blossoms is generally 6-8 weeks. Thus it is best to begin planting the bulbs by mid November to insure blossoming during the upcoming December holiday period. The amaryllis is a native plant to South Africa and warmer climates that experience wet and dry periods. The bulb won't survive a frost and therefore should be planted indoors or pulled up from the ground before the first frost hits.

The amaryllis bulb can be grown to produce gorgeous blooms for many years when taken care of properly. In some cases, the bulb may produce two flowering periods each year. However, they must go through a growth cycle and a dormancy cycle.

How to Plant & Grow the Amaryllis bulb:

Most kits come with instructions and all of the material needed to plant the amaryllis bulb. Following the instructions is the best option. When instructions are missing or not provided, then follow these basic steps:

1. Plant the bulb in the rich planting material supplied in the kit such that the top 1/3 of the bulb is above the planting material. It is critical to plant the bulb with the top 1/3 above the soil line. This will insure stem and blossom growth.
2. If choosing your own planter, select one that is slightly larger than the circumference of the bulb and has adequate drainage capability. Keep in mind that amaryllis bulbs prefer compact growing areas and they do not require a lot of soil material to grow big and strong. The pot should also have adequate drainage so that the bulb does not rot from being exposed to too much water.
3. Water the potted bulb ONCE thoroughly from top to bottom. Excessive water will cause the amaryllis bulb to rot. Once new green growth begins to appear at the top of the bulb, then water whenever the soil below the top inch is dry (generally no more than once every 3 days). It is recommended to water the plant from the bottom by letting the soil to draw up water from the base of the pot.
4. When the blossoms are opening, keep the soil moist without over watering the plant.
5. Place the potted bulb in an area that gets as much sunshine as possible. It thrives in full sun, and in temperatures ranging from 65-75 degrees. Rotate the plant often as the flower stem will grow toward the light source – this will help the plant to grow straight. In some cases, the flower stems may need to be supported

If you intend to keep the bulb to grow again next year, then it is very important to allow the leaves to grow and turn yellow and die on their own timeframe. The leaves provide the necessary nutrients to the bulb which it stores for the next growing season. Do not cut or trim the leaves until they have yellowed & died.