

## Amaryllis Care

Few bulbs are easier to grow than amaryllis - and few bloom with greater exuberance and beauty. Just plant the bulb in good potting soil. A support stake is handy for keeping the blooms upright, but little else is required: water regularly and provide bright, direct light. Blooms will appear four to six weeks after planting.

If your amaryllis is not already potted, plant each amaryllis bulb in a heavy 6-8" pot. Lightweight pots may tip over. Plant the bulb, pointed-end-up, in potting soil. Do not use soil from the garden because it will not drain properly. Pack the soil gently around the bulb so approximately one-third of the bulb remains above the soil line.

Place the pot in a sunny location and water sparingly until you see about 2" of new growth. From then on, water regularly. As the plant grows, turn the pot periodically to encourage the stalk to grow straight. Within five to eight weeks, you will have an exciting and dynamic floral display. To prolong the blooms, keep the pot out of direct sunlight.

### For Bloom Next Year

Amaryllis can be encouraged to blossom again the following year. It takes a little planning and extra care but is quite simple and very rewarding. After the flowers have faded, cut the flower stalk to within 1" of the top of the bulb. Continue to water and feed the plant regularly with a liquid houseplant fertilizer. Amaryllis will grow a number of leaves during the spring and summer. This will help the plant produce energy for the following year's bloom. In mid-August, begin withholding water and let the foliage die back naturally as the pot dries out completely. Store the dormant bulb in a cool, dark and dry place for a minimum of eight weeks. About five to eight weeks before you want the amaryllis to flower again, replot the bulb in fresh potting soil and resume watering - sparingly at first. Once you see new growth, increase watering. You can expect another dramatic floral display within five to eight weeks. By following these basic care guidelines, you will be able to encourage your amaryllis to flower year after year.

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