

When growth resumes, some amaryllis bulbs produce foliage, but no flowers. Amaryllis that fail to bloom may not have been able to store adequate food reserves in their bulbs in spring and summer. Others may not have been exposed to the proper temperatures (50° to 55°F for 8 to 10 weeks).

Amaryllis Varieties

Many excellent varieties are available.

Here are a few examples of single-blooming varieties.

- '**Apple Blossom**'—soft pink and white
- '**Green Goddess**'—white with a green throat
- '**Minerva**'—red with white star
- '**Picotée**'—white with red edge
- '**Prince Carnival**'—white with red stripes
- '**Red Lion**'—deep crimson red
- '**White Christmas**'—snow white

Double-flowering amaryllis are also available.

- '**Double Picotée**'—pure white flower with red edges around the petals
- '**Lady Jane**'—rose-pink flower with white streaks down the center of each petal
- '**Pasadena**'—red flower with white streaks

Miniature varieties are only slightly shorter than their single- and double-flowering counterparts. However, their flowers are about half the width of the large flowering types. Here are a few examples of widely available miniature varieties.

- '**Baby Star**'—deep red with a white star center
- '**Fairy tale**'—white with raspberry red stripes
- '**Pink Star**'—rose pink with a white star center

For more information on selection, planting, cultural practices, and environmental quality—

- Contact your Iowa State University Extension county office.
- Visit one of these Web sites.

ISU Extension Distribution Center—
www.extension.iastate.edu/store

ISU Horticulture—
www.yardandgarden.extension.iastate.edu

Reiman Gardens—
www.reimangardens.iastate.edu

Call ISU's Hotline at (515) 294-3108
(Monday-Friday, 10 a.m.-noon and 1-4:30 p.m.)

If you want to learn more about horticulture through training and volunteer work, ask your ISU Extension office for information about the ISU Extension Master Gardener program.

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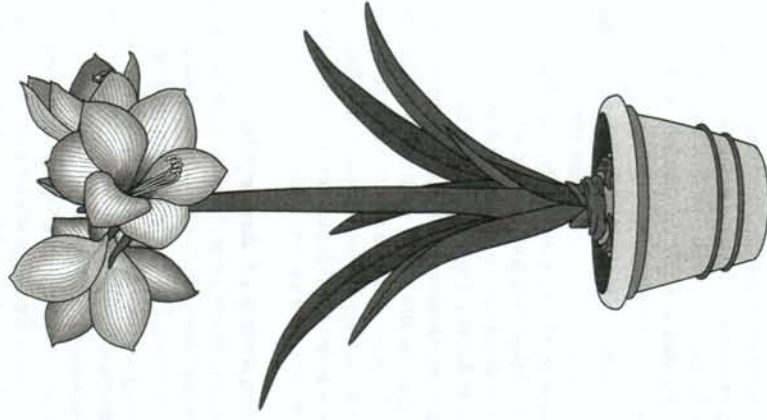
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... and justice for all

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Growing Amaryllis



Amaryllis are popular flowering bulbs grown indoors during the winter months. Their spectacular, trumpet-shaped blooms can be 8 to 10 inches across. Flower colors include red, pink, orange, salmon, white, and bicolors. Two to six flowers (the average is four) are produced atop an 18- to 36-inch-tall flower stalk.

Amaryllis offer an excellent, hands-on learning opportunity for children to plant and watch grow. The bulbs are very large, easy to handle and plant, and begin to grow soon after planting. Bulbs potted in early November should be in bloom by the middle to end of December.

Although their flowers resemble lilies, the amaryllis belongs to the *Amaryllidaceae* family. Its genus is *Hippeastrum*. Amaryllis are native to tropical and subtropical areas of the Americas, thus are tender perennials and grown as houseplants. Both the bulb and the plant are poisonous.

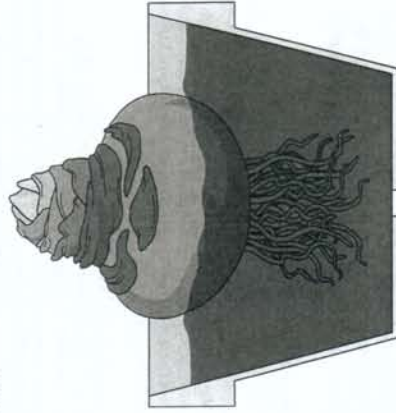
Forcing Amaryllis

Amaryllis bulbs can be purchased pre-planted in pots or unpotted. When purchasing amaryllis, select large, solid bulbs that show no sign of shriveling or decay. The largest bulbs often produce 2 flower stalks. Single-flowering, double-flowering, and miniature amaryllis varieties are available.

When planting an amaryllis bulb, select a pot that is approximately 1 to 2 inches wider than the diameter of the bulb. The container may be clay, ceramic, or plastic, but should have drainage holes in the bottom. Plant the bulb in good, well-drained potting soil. Add a small amount of potting soil in the bottom of the pot. Center the bulb atop the soil in the middle of the pot. Then add additional potting soil, firming it around the roots and bulb.



When finished potting, the upper one-half of the bulb should remain above the soil surface. Also leave about one inch between the soil surface and the pot's rim. Water the soil thoroughly with lukewarm water and place in a warm (70° to 75°F) location.



Check the pot before watering a pre-planted amaryllis bulb. If the container doesn't have drainage holes, remove the bulb. Drill small holes in the bottom of the container and replant or transfer the bulb to a pot with drainage holes.

After the initial watering, allow the soil to dry somewhat before watering again. Keep the soil moist, but not wet. Don't overwater; once per week is usually adequate.

When growth appears, move the plant to a sunny window and apply a water-soluble fertilizer every 2 to 4 weeks. During flower stalk elongation, turn the pot each day to keep the flower stalk growing straight. Flower stalks that lean badly may need staking.

Flowering usually occurs about 6 to 8 weeks after potting. When the amaryllis begins to bloom, move the plant to a slightly cooler (65° to 70°F) location that doesn't receive direct sun to prolong the life of the flowers.

Care After Flowering

After the flowers fade, use a sharp knife to cut off the flower stalk about one to two inches above the bulb. Be careful not to damage the strap-like foliage. In order for the bulb to bloom again, the plant must replenish its depleted food reserves. The leaves manufacture food for storage in the bulb. Place the plant in a sunny window and water when the soil surface is nearly dry. Fertilize every 2 to 4 weeks with a houseplant fertilizer.

The amaryllis can be moved outdoors in late May or early June. Harden or acclimate the plant to the outdoors by placing it in a shady, protected area for 2 to 3 days then gradually expose it to a few hours of direct sun. Once hardened, select a site in partial to full sun. Dig a hole and set the pot into the ground. Outdoors, continue to water the plant during dry weather. Also, continue to fertilize the amaryllis once or twice a month with a complete analysis soluble plant food through July. Bring the plant indoors in mid-September. Plants left indoors should be kept in a sunny window.

Reflowering of Amaryllis

In order to bloom, amaryllis bulbs must be exposed to temperatures of 50° to 55°F for a minimum of 8 to 10 weeks. This can be accomplished by inducing the plant to go dormant and then storing the dormant bulb at a temperature of 50° to 55°F. To induce dormancy, place the plant in a cool, semi-dark location in late September and withhold water. Cut off the foliage when the leaves turn brown. Then place the dormant bulb in a dark, cool (50° to 55°F) location for at least 8 to 10 weeks.

After the cool requirement has been met, start the growth cycle again by repotting the bulb in fresh soil, watering, and placing it in a well-lit, 70° to 75°F location. Keep the potting soil moist, but not wet, until growth appears.

Another option is to place the plant in a well-lit, 50° to 55°F location in fall. Maintain the amaryllis as a green plant from fall to early to mid-winter. After the cool requirement has been met, move the plant to a warmer (70° to 75°F) location.