



Amaryllis – *Hippeastrum* spp.

Gardeners call it Amaryllis, but its true name is *Hippeastrum*, a genus which includes 50-70 species and a plethora of hybrids and named cultivars. All of them will give you spectacular, long-lasting blooms during the holiday season and, with only a bit of work, many years of beauty. Amaryllis prefer even temperatures, bright indirect light and do not require much watering. They are rarely visited by pests or diseases and are easily cared for – what more could you ask?

Potting Your Amaryllis Bulb

- Amaryllis bulbs are dug and dried before shipping, leaving basal roots dry and shriveled. Rest the base of the bulb on a small jar full of tepid water for about an hour before planting. Only the stringy roots should be submerged.
- Choose a deep pot large enough to allow a 1” space around your bulb. A larger pot may stay too moist and lead to bulb rot since roots will not develop until after flowering. Once established, Amaryllis prefer to be pot-bound.
- Smaller bulbs such as *H. papilio* may be grouped together in a pot for a colorful display.
- Fill the bottom of your pot with well-drained potting soil – we use *Espoma Organic Potting Mix* with a handful of *Espoma Soil Perfector* added for better drainage. Thoroughly mix in 2 teaspoons of *Espoma Bulb-tone 3-5-3*.
- Make a small mound in the center of the soil and fan the roots over this mound. Holding the bulb steady and upright, continue filling the pot until two-thirds of the bulb is covered, firming the soil around the roots as you go.
- The top third of the bulb – the “neck” – should remain above the soil line.
- Water the plant thoroughly with warm water and place in a bright, warm (68°-70°), well-ventilated place, free from drafts. Bottom heat will encourage faster rooting.

Care of Your Newly Potted Amaryllis

- After that first watering, do NOT water your Amaryllis until the bud shoot appears. Keep the plant in its warm spot.
- Once the bud shoot emerges, display in bright, indirect sunlight. Blooming begins about five weeks after potting.
- While the plant is in bud and bloom, water just enough to keep the soil moist. Deadhead promptly.
- Amaryllis grown in water may be potted up after blooming, following the directions above.
- After blooming, keep as indoor houseplant until end of April, then place outdoors, protected from hot afternoon sun.
- Water regularly. Feed monthly with *Nature’s Source 10-4-3*. Bring indoors by mid-October to avoid the first frost.
- Amaryllis require a period of dormancy in a cool (55°), dim environment for 8-10 weeks. Do not water or fertilize.
- Bulbs may be divided and repotted during dormancy, but only after at least 2-3 years of being left undisturbed.
- A bud shoot will appear around mid-January, signaling the end of dormancy. Water thoroughly and begin fertilizing.
- To promote holiday blooming, plants must begin the cool period in August – the bud shoot will appear in late October.
- If you have several different Amaryllis and would like to have a continuous train of bloom through the winter months, simply stagger their cooling periods by two or three weeks so they will “wake up” one after the other.
- Mature Amaryllis may also reward you with a bonus repeat bloom in July with just a little extra love and fertilization.