



Quite Simply. Amazing.

# growing guide

## Bulbs: Amaryllis

An Amaryllis is one of the easiest Christmas plants to grow as well as to save from year to year. Only a few simple procedures are needed.

### Growing a New Amaryllis

#### Planting Soil and Depth

Plant an amaryllis in any good potting soil; however, only plant the bulb halfway. In other words, the top half of the bulb is exposed.

#### Watering

Water at planting time and do not water again until you see green growth. If you water too much before you see growth, the roots will rot and growth will be delayed or aborted. Once growth has started, water when the top of the soil is dry to the touch. Once to twice a week as necessary, depending on the warmth of the home.

#### Flowering

The flower stalk often appears before the leaves, but not always. If only leaves appear, be patient. On occasion you will find a stubborn amaryllis that will not flower until summer time, though this is rare. At Christmas time, an amaryllis will flower about six weeks after planting. When the petals have faded remove the top of the flower stalk; after the stalk has turned yellow, cut it off.

#### Saving an Amaryllis

#### Treat It As A Houseplant

After the flower is gone, treat the plant as you would any houseplant until summer. (Water weekly and begin weekly fertilizing in March.)

As soon as all danger of frost is past, set the plant outside on the east side of the house or where it can get morning sun and afternoon shade. You may leave it in its pot or plant it in the ground. While outside, water it 3 to 4 times per week, with one of those waterings containing fertilizer such as Fertilome Gardener's Special soluble plant food. (In the ground, it needs less watering than if it is above ground in a pot.)

Before frost comes in the fall, (sometime in September) bring the amaryllis into the house and set it in the basement. Lay the plant on its side with all foliage intact.

Discontinue watering. Once the foliage has dried it may be removed. Allow the plant to

rest for 8 or more weeks. After the rest period, bring the plant out to begin growing again. Start it as you would any new amaryllis. (You may repot at this time if the bulb looks too big for the pot, or if you had it in the ground.)

#### Flowering after the first year

An amaryllis often does not reflower the first year that you save it. However, after this first year, the bulb will flower every year, usually with an increase in the number of stalks and/or flowers. Usually, one large bulb that is kept for four or more years produces up to three flower stalks with four large blossoms on each stalk.

#### Developing Bulblets

Often an older bulb will send off shoots from the base. These may be removed unless you want to multiply your plants. If so, leave the bulblets on for a couple of years. After that, they may be pulled off and planted on their own for their flowering enjoyment. They can actually be pulled off sooner, but doing so slows down their maturity.

Few plants are as effortless in their care, last for years, and produce magnificent blossoms. These directions might sound complicated but all you really need to do is:

- Treat it as a houseplant
- Set outside in May
- Bring inside in September
- Give it 8-week rest period
- Treat it as a houseplant.



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## Bulbs: Planting Spring Flowering Bulbs

### Bulbs: Plant in Autumn for Lively Color in Spring

Bulbs are a true exercise in anticipation. Select and plant an array of bulbs in fall and await a delightful display of color and foliage in the spring. Many bulbs can even peek up and out through snow cover! The season of anticipation can be about the same as waiting for professional baseball season's Spring Training: the baseball season winds down in September and October (right when you are out and planting bulbs) and before you know it — it's Spring Training! And just about time for your first blooms to pop their heads through the surface of your garden.

Producing a gorgeous bouquet of spring flowers from bulbs is something any gardener can do. Bulbs really are "brown thumb" proof!

The only thing our hardy bulbs require, other than soil and water of course, is cool temperatures, usually 40 to 60 days at 45 degrees or lower. During this so called "dormant" period the bulbs are developing their root systems and preparing for spring. Cold temperatures trigger the metamorphosis in spring flowering bulbs. They must have the change in temperature in order to grow and bloom.

### Let's Get Specific

#### *How deep do I Plant?*

Usually 2 1/2 to 3 times the diameter of the bulb but it can vary so check the cultural information available at the display at the Hoerr Nursery Garden Center.

#### *How do I design a planting?*

Daffodils (also known as Jonquils) and Narcissus, crocus, snowdrops, Dutch Iris and many other small bulbs naturalize

(multiply) easily so planting them is a snap.

Dig a hole to the appropriate depth. It can be a large space — for example, 2' x 2' or a small space, such as 6" x 6". Then simply grab a handful of bulbs, drop them from head height and plant where they land. Don't worry if some are right next to each other or you think too much space is between others. That's the point: an unplanned, random look. When you plant them, make sure you turn each bulb so that the top is up and the stem/root bottom is at the bottom of your hole.

Tulips, except for the species or wild tulips, hyacinths and grape muscari are a bit formal for the natural look and display better beds or borders. But please don't plant them in a straight line like little soldiers. They appear too formal that way. Instead plant them in groups of at least 5 per square foot.

For maximum enjoyment and impact, group your colors and forms. For instance, a planting of 15 red tulips with 9-11 white hyacinths and a border of 35-50 grape muscari creates drifts of vibrant color excitement.

*I hear the squirrels might dig them up and eat them. True?*

It is true. And if they are hungry enough, even deterrents like the ones listed below might fall short. So, plant enough bulbs to make sure you have a splendid display even if you lose a few to weather and a few to the little animals who share your yard with you.

If you have a large population of squirrels, groundhogs, chipmunks or other potential bulb eating critters there are a few things you can try to thwart them:

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drops of turpentine and shake well. The odor is said to keep them away and not harm the bulbs at all.

- Spray the bulbs with Ropel, a ready-to-use, deterrent.
- Plant daffodils and hyacinths. They are poisonous to the critters and they won't touch them.

*So how do I plant them?*

Though bulbs are very forgiving you still need to plant correctly, no matter what your scheme.

- Dig your holes or beds to the proper depth as measured *from the bottom of the bulb*.
- Throw a tablespoon or so of bulb fertilizer or bone meal per bulb in the bottom of the hole and mix it up in the soil.
- Set the bulb pointed end up.
- Cover and firm but do not pack the soil.
- Water well to get the roots growing.
- Add soil if settling occurs. (Don't allow a pool over your bulbs.)
- Sleep well all winter knowing you'll enjoy color, fragrance and form next spring!





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## Bulbs: Forcing Spring Bulbs

All bulbs, except amaryllis and paperwhites, need 12-20 weeks of cool conditions to develop their roots. (See chart at the end of this Growing Guide.) Potting up bulbs in September or October means forced blooms could begin in February, just when winter doldrums are setting in. Here are some simple instructions:

Choose large bulbs, they bloom better.

Tulips, daffodils and hyacinths are easy to force. Purchase enough bulbs to pack them tightly into your pots and containers, and to give yourself a "margin of error" because sometimes with living plant material, things don't turn out quite as you expect...

Choose clean containers of glass, plastic, clay, pottery or any other material suitable for growing plants. They should be a minimum of 4-6" deep, with a drainage hole.

Use good quality potting soil. (*See special note on Hyacinths and Paperwhites below.*)

Place a 2" deep layer of potting soil in the bottom of the pot. Press the bulbs into the soil, crowding them a little. Finish filling the pot with potting soil. Note: for forcing, the bulbs do not need to be as deep as you would normally place them in the garden. Usually just below the surface is sufficient.

Water all planted pots.

Place planted pots in a cold, but protected location: buried in the garden and covered with straw, in a refrigerator, set in a cold frame, garden shed, or garage where temperatures will naturally chill but pots will not freeze solid.

Check the pots periodically and water if needed.

After about 12 weeks, and as tips begin to emerge through the soil, bring a few pots in to a cool, but sunny room, water, and begin growing. They should bloom in another couple of weeks.

Hyacinths can be forced in water. They need to be positioned with the water coming just to the bottom of

the bulb. There are special glass jars for forcing hyacinths – a favorite activity in the Victorian era.

**Place in a cool place and check periodically. When the flower buds are showing color, the plant is ready to be moved inside. A note on hyacinths: wear gloves if you have sensitive skin.**

**Traditionally paperwhites *narcissus* and small narcissus can be started in a shallow decorative pot in gravel or small decorative rocks—they don't need to be in soil. Be prepared to support the tall stems and the heavy blooms. The lovely, fragrant flowers can become quite top-heavy when at peak.**

Suggestions:

Deeper pots allow you to place several layers of bulbs in one pot: daffodils on the bottom, tulips in the middle, and crocus on top. Depending on when the bulbs would naturally bloom (early, mid, or late season) you can get a longer blooming display from one pot.

To extend your bloom season, stagger you plant your bulbs, and when you bring them into the house.

Carefully selecting grower pots that fit nicely into baskets allows you to create a more attractive display at bloom time. Place a little moss over the soil surface as the tips emerge for a true garden look.

Forced bulbs do not usually recover well and bloom again. But do try planting them directly into the garden and side dressing with a little fertilizer.



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| <b>NAME OF BULB</b>             | <b>WEEKS OF COLD</b> | <b>WEEKS TO BLOOM</b> |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Amaryllis/Hippeastrum           | none                 | 6 to 8                |
| Crocus chrysanthus              | 15                   | 2-3                   |
| Crocus vernus                   | 15                   | 2                     |
| Fritillaria meleagris           | 15                   | 3                     |
| Galanthus nivalis               | 15                   | 2                     |
| Hyacinth                        | 10-14                | 2-3                   |
| Muscari armeniacum              | 13-15                | 2-3                   |
| Muscari botryoides alba         | 14-15                | 2-3                   |
| Narcissus                       | 15-17                | 2-3                   |
| Narcissus tazetta (paperwhites) | none                 | 3-5                   |
| Scilla tubergeniana             | 12-15                | 2-3                   |
| Scilla siberica                 | 15                   | 2-3                   |
| Tulipa                          | 14-20                | 2-3                   |