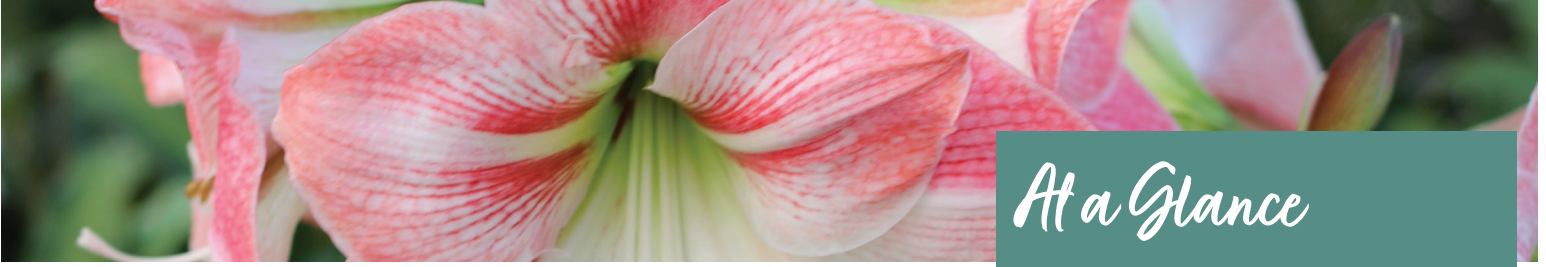


Amaryllis

How to plant and care for stunning and holiday season bulbs



Enormous, brightly-colored, flamboyant flowers make amaryllis plants a favorite during the holidays. They will bloom for 7-10 weeks during the darkest days of winter, chasing away the gloom and brightening spirits.

When to plant

Once planted, large premium bulbs will take 8-12 weeks to bloom, with smaller bulbs taking 4-8 weeks. This means planting mid-October for a late December bloom. Larger bulbs produce bigger more numerous flowers.

How to plant

Choose a pot that is at least 7 inches deep but no more than an inch or two wider than the bulb. Clay pots are ideal as their weight provides stability as the plant becomes top heavy. Make sure the pot has a drainage hole. Fill the pot half way with potting soil, set the bulb in place, and then pack more potting soil around the bulb. Leave an inch of space between the soil line and the pot's rim. The top third of the bulb should protrude above the soil line so that water won't accumulate around its neck causing it to rot. Water thoroughly.

At a Glance

Size: 2-3 feet tall

Light: Bright indirect until green growth appears, then sunny location.

Pot Size: 7" deep with diameter lightly larger than bulb.

Soil: Good quality potting mix.

Water: Water regularly after green growth appears.

Temperature: 65-75 degrees day, 55-65 at night

Fertilizer: Bulb food or liquid fertilizer (5-10-5).

Don't water again until green growth appears.

How to Grow

Place pot in warm, bright room. When green growth appears, move to a sunny location and begin watering regularly. Water thoroughly until the water drains out of the bottom of the pot. Empty the saucer after each watering-do not let the plant sit in water. When the flower buds begin to open, move the plant to a cooler, shadier location to extend bloom time. If your pot becomes top heavy and tippy, try placing the pot in a second larger and heavier pot.

Blooming

Each stem will produce four or more flowers. As each bloom fades, snip it off. When all the blooms on a stem have faded, cut off the entire stem about an inch from its base. Don't assume the show is over after the first flower stem - the bulb will probably produce a second stem with four more flowers.

Reblooming Your Amaryllis

After Bloom

Your amaryllis has just invested all its energy in producing flowers, and now needs plenty of water, fertilizer, and sunshine to allow its leaves to carry on the process of photosynthesis and replenish the bulb's food supply. Move the plant to a sunny window, water as needed, and fertilize twice a month to promote healthy leaves. Do not remove any foliage yet. You can move the pot outside in the spring once nighttime temperatures are above 50 degrees. Find a spot where it will get at least 4 hours of sun per day.

Dormancy and Storage

When the foliage starts to turn yellow, usually by late August, the plant is beginning its dormant stage. Stop watering and fertilizing. If outside, bring the plant in before the first frost. Cut off the dead foliage and store the bulb still in its pot, in a dark, cool (around 55 degrees) spot for two months.

Bring It Back

Begin awakening your amaryllis bulb around ten weeks before you want it to bloom again. Gently remove the top inch of soil with a spoon and replace it with fresh soil. Water thoroughly. Then follow the same procedures as the initial planting.

Amaryllis can be brought back to bloom again for years and years!