

AMARYLLIS BULBS

The hybrid amaryllis is a cold sensitive bulb easily grown indoors only. Amaryllis is prized for its huge showy flowers ranging in color from scarlet to crimson to white. The foliage grows rapidly during spring and summer, ripening early in the fall if temperatures are cool and soil is allowed to dry out. The bulbs normally remain dormant until late winter (Dec or Jan).

Planting

The preferred medium for amaryllis is a soil-less mix such as Fertilome's Ultimate Potting Mix. A space of approximately two inches between the bulb and the edge of the pot is desired. Press the mix firmly around the bulb and water thoroughly. Do not water again until the roots are well developed. Over-watering will lead to bulb rot. Only when the roots have become well established will the plants need more frequent watering. After the flower stalk has emerged, an application of a balanced liquid fertilizer at intervals of ten days is helpful.

Flowering

Amaryllis will flower six to eight weeks after growth has initiated. When the flowers have withered, cut the stem off about two inches above the bulb. When all danger of frost has passed, the plant in the pot may be placed into the open ground in full sunlight. It may also be grown indoors in a bright location during the summer. Gradually decrease watering late in the summer when the leaves begin to turn yellow. Allow the soil to become completely dry when the foliage has died back. While in this dormant state, the bulb should be left in the pot and stored in a cool place, preferable around 40-45 degrees. Turn the pot on its side and do not water during the dormant period.

Re-Flowering

Since an amaryllis requires six to eight weeks from the beginning of growth to the production of flowers, you can have extended flowering period by selecting the time for growth initiation. Begin by starting growth in the first bulbs in January and continue through the later part of March. Before applying water to the soil in the pot to start the growth, check to see whether repotting is needed. Repotting is required if the bulb is crowding the edge of the pot or if offshoots have developed. Repot into a larger pot with some existing soil adhering to the bulb. Any offsets will flower in two or three years. Bulbs purchased from a garden center usually bloom around Christmas time. Subsequent years, the bulb will usually bloom in January or February.

