



# J&L Garden Center

The All Season Gift and Garden Center

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## The Amaryllis

The Amaryllis (*Hippeastrum*) is truly a spectacular plant that has become a conversation piece for the indoor gardener. Amaryllis Bulbs originated in the tropical areas of South America but they have been grown and hybridized throughout the world. The Amaryllis bulb is a perennial bulb, but it must be taken inside during the winter in cold climates. With proper care the Amaryllis bulb can produce spectacular blossoms for several years.

Amaryllis bulbs vary in size. As a rule, larger bulbs produce more stems and flowers than smaller bulbs. Small bulbs (26cm - 28cm size) bulbs produce one or two flower stems with three to five flowers on each stem. Medium bulbs (34cm size) bulbs produce two to four flower stems with four to five flowers on each stem. Large bulbs (40cm size) bulbs produce three to five flower stems with four to five flowers on each stem. Amaryllis bulbs produce an abundance of flowers and make a real show!

We have more than fifteen different varieties and colors available each fall. Beginning in October, we try to have some Amaryllis bulbs available all winter until at least Valentines Day. Stop by and learn more about these wonder winter flowers.



### Blooming Time

Amaryllis normally bloom in the spring, but if the bulbs are stored in cool temperatures of 55 degrees Fahrenheit for several weeks, the genetic timetable of the amaryllis bulb will be set ahead and it can be in full bloom during the winter. Some varieties of Amaryllis will bloom earlier than others. Amaryllis bulbs are sometimes unpredictable. After planting, some bulbs may start growing and blooming immediately. Other bulbs may wait several weeks to start growing. Once the bulb does start growing, it usually takes six to eight weeks for the blossoms to appear. After your blossoms have faded don't be too surprised if another blossom stem appears later in the spring or summer.



### Planting

If you cannot plant your bulb immediately after purchase, store it in a cool area until you are ready to plant it. Before planting, place the bulb's roots in lukewarm water for an hour. Plant the Amaryllis bulb in a pot just slightly larger than the diameter of the bulb. Do not use a large pot because its roots like to be crowded. Use a nutritious potting soil such as **Black Gold All Purpose Potting Soil**.

Bury two thirds of the bulb in potting soil and leave about one third of the bulb above the soil level. Do not bury the bulb

too deeply and do not fill the pot too full of potting soil; leave enough room in the pot to hold water. Be careful not to damage the bulb's roots as you plant it. Press firmly on the soil around the bulb to make sure the bulb is steady in the pot. Place the pot in a saucer and water it thoroughly. Remove any excess water from the saucer after one hour. Do not fertilize your bulb for about a month after planting. Once new growth starts to appear, fertilize every two weeks with **Fertilome Blooming and Rooting Fertilizer**. Some gardeners prefer **Osmocote Fertilizer** because it is a long lasting, slow releasing fertilizer. Either fertilizer will help your amaryllis grow and bloom beautifully for many years to come.



### Keep it Warm

Place the pot in a warm spot where it receives plenty of light. Heat is the main growth stimulator. If the bulb starts to grow too fast, cool the bulb, and the soil, down.

If the bulb is not growing, or it is growing too slow, increase the soil temperature of the pot. Set the pot in a sunny window or on top of a radio or TV to raise the soil temperature. Direct sunlight also helps stimulate stem growth and helps the blossom stem grow properly.

### Planting Tips

Use a pot just slightly larger than the bulb.

Spread Roots out when planting.

Do not damage the roots.

Plant with one-third of the Bulb above the soil level.

Use Black Gold All Purpose Potting Soil.

Cover the soil surface with a layer of fine gravel to help keep the 'Bugs Out'.



## Water Sparingly

Water the Amaryllis bulb sparingly at first. Do not let the soil dry out but don't water it until the plant begins to grow. As the blossom stem develops, the bulb needs more water. As the blossoms begin to appear the plant needs even more water. Water is most important during its actual blooming period. Do not let your amaryllis bulb dry out while it is blooming or the blossoms will not last as long. Continue watering your amaryllis bulb after it finishes blooming, throughout the growing season, just as you would water any houseplant, but don't over water it.



## Watch It Grow

Amaryllis grows fast. Sometimes it seems as though you can sit back and actually watch it grow. Amaryllis grow faster in warm room temperatures and in direct sunlight. When amaryllis blossoms finally open, the spectacular flowers will last for two or three weeks. Cooler temperatures during this period will help the blossoms last even longer. Make sure the bulb has plenty of water during this stage of growth. Support the leaves and the blossom stems so they do not bend or tip over.

When the blossoms fade, cut the blossom stem off close to the bulb. Don't cut off any leaf stems, just remove the blossom stem. Another blossom stem may begin to form immediately or within a few weeks. Four or five blossom stems are possible on the larger size (40cm) bulbs.

## After Blooming

There is no need to discard your amaryllis bulb after it is finished blooming. With the proper care you can make it bloom again next year.

After the blooming period is over, remove the blossom stems and reduce the amount of water you give the plant. Do not damage or remove the leaves, let the leaves continue to grow all summer. Do not let the leaves bend over or break. Tie the leaves upright with a soft, pliable string so you won't damage the leaf.

If the leaves bend over, or break, they will not supply the necessary food the bulb needs, and the plant may not produce as many blossoms next year. Water your plant as needed and fertilize it twice a month using **Fertilome Blooming and Rooting Fertilizer**.

When the outside temperature will stay above 50 degrees at night you can plant your Amaryllis bulb outside in the garden. You can also grow your amaryllis outside in a pot during the summer, but make sure it doesn't dry out (even while you are on vacation). Amaryllis bulbs can grow in partial sun or in full sun, but protect your plant when you first put it outside; until the leaves get used to the bright sunlight. Remember to fertilize your Amaryllis plant regularly all summer.



## Stop Watering

Gradually stop watering your Amaryllis in September. The leaves should slowly die away. If they don't die by themselves bend the leaf stems over but do not cut the leaves off. The leaves are still feeding the bulb.

By the middle of October the bulb should be dug, the leaves cut off, and the roots washed and trimmed slightly (the bulb should look just like it did when you bought the bulb). Be careful not to damage the roots or remove too many of them.

Store your bulb in a cool, dry, dark area (about 45 to 50 degrees) for eight to twelve weeks. Tip the bulb on its side while you store it.



## Time to Re-pot

After its dormant stage (approximately eight to twelve weeks) plant your Amaryllis bulb the same way you planted it last year. Do not re-use the same potting soil, or leave the bulb planted in the same pot from year to year. Buy fresh potting soil each year and wash the pot thoroughly before re-potting.

The size of the bulb lets you know how well you took care of it last year and whether it will bloom again this coming year.

If the bulb is smaller this year than it was last year, it probably won't bloom. Don't throw the bulb away; grow it another year even though it might not bloom. Fertilize it regularly and don't let the leaves bend over. This will help the bulb size increase next year. Many amaryllis bulbs may only bloom every other year without extra fertilizer and care.

If your bulb is larger this year than it was last year you should expect flowers again this year. The larger the bulb grew, the more blossoms you should expect.

It is not easy to grow and maintain the strength of amaryllis bulbs year after year, so don't give up if your bulb dies after three or four years.

Buy another amaryllis bulb and start over. Or, just for fun, buy two or three and try another color.



## Amaryllis Trivia

It takes growers three years to produce a 34cm size Amaryllis Bulb, and up to 5 years to produce a 40cm size bulb.

Amaryllis flowers are available in many different colors, including; Red, Pink, White, Orange, Striped, Salmon, Yellow, Peach, and many shades in between.

Amaryllis flowers are available both in the standard size flowers and miniature size flowers.

Amaryllis flowers are available in the standard single petaled flowers or in double petaled flowers.

Amaryllis bulbs are often considered Christmas flowers but the bulbs may be available until April or May.

Amaryllis bulbs may bloom at different times of the year, depending on growing conditions. With a little luck, it is possible to have some amaryllis blooming all year. Christmas, Spring, Summer, or Fall.

