

Growing Gorgeous Amaryllis

Your Ultimate Guide To Enjoying
Your Amaryllis Bulbs for Years to Come



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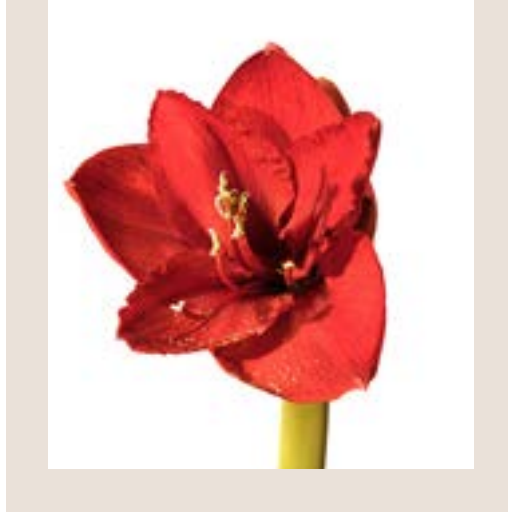
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Hello *friend*

My passion for Amaryllis budded many years ago when my grandmother introduced me to this incredible plant. I had no idea the joy and wonder that was in store for me weeks later when that first deep-red blossom began to unfurl before my eyes. I was instantly hooked and began giving Amaryllis as gifts to family and friends. These days, we offer Amaryllis on our small flower farm in central Oklahoma, with full intent to pass the joy along to fellow flower lovers.

Over time, I've been asked questions about how to grow and care for these beautiful plants. I hope you enjoy this free guide and are inspired to share the wonder of Amaryllis with the ones you love.

Sara Wilson

Flower Farmer and Creator
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The Incredible Amaryllis

There are few plants that boast the show-stopping beauty and elegance of the Amaryllis.

Related to the lily, the Amaryllis is a tropical plant with long, deep green waxy leaves and thick stems that bear richly colorful blooms at impressive diameters of 4 to 10 inches wide. The flower stems, or scapes, can grow up to 36 inches tall.

Amaryllis bulbs are large and can range in size from 26 cm to 38 cm in circumference. The larger the bulb, the more stems (and ultimately more blooms) the bulb can yield. Bulb sizes and bloom timing vary by the regions in which they are grown.

There are now hundreds of varieties of Amaryllis that come in a dazzling array of colors, from creamy white to the palest pink, magenta to deep red, and even soft apricot to saturated orange. Some blooms bear stripes and spots to add dramatic flair. Some new cultivars have long, spiky petals, while others are bred as a miniature option. All are stunningly beautiful.



In the United States, you typically see garden catalogs and bulb companies feature Amaryllis around the holidays, as it is incredibly easy to force blooms indoors during a time when weather conditions are not ideal for gardening. Most people think Amaryllis only bloom once a year, but with the proper care, you can train your potted Amaryllis to bloom again indoors or plant it outside to bloom along with your other cutting garden favorites.

Origins of the Amaryllis

AMARYLLIS HAVE ROOTS IN TROPICAL AND SUBTROPICAL COUNTRIES

The first plant called the Amaryllis originated in South Africa and was often also called the Belladonna Lily. However, the large flowering beauty we know of today is actually from the genus Hippeastrum and it originated in South America.

The Greek name Hippeastrum is derived from 'hippeus', which means knight, and 'astrum', which means star, as the large blooms bear a similar shape to the medieval weapon aptly called the knight's star.

For generations, there were disputes over how to classify the two plants due to their close similarities. To simplify, the name "Amaryllis" has become a trade name for both families of species even though they originate from different places.

Modern Amaryllis bulbs are sourced and cultivated primarily in the Netherlands (Northern Hemisphere) and in South America and South Africa (Southern Hemisphere); although hybrids are being discovered all over the world.



Did You Know?

- In Greek mythology, the moniker 'Amaryllis' comes from the name of a smitten young shepherdess who stabbed herself in front of the closed door of Alteo, a herculean-sized man who cared more for flowers than for the girl. A deep red flower grew from where the girl's blood was shed.
- Archeologists have discovered depictions of Amaryllis blooms on the tombs of ancient Egyptians.
- In classic literature, Amaryllis are known to symbolize pride, and romantic poetry.
- In Christian traditions, Amaryllis represent peace and hope.
- According to the Guinness Book of World Records, the tallest Amaryllis grown was recorded at 4 ft. 4 in.
- Amaryllis enthusiasts have reported more than 30 years of growth from a single Amaryllis bulb with proper care.

3 Types of Amaryllis



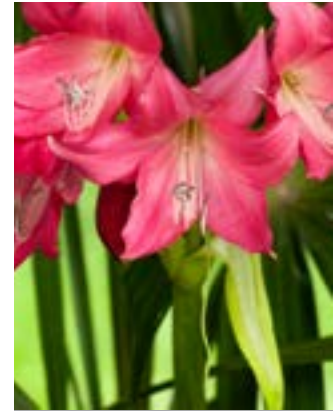
ROYAL DUTCH

Cultivated in the Northern Hemisphere, these varieties will bloom eight to twelve weeks from the time they are potted. Their very large blooms can present as single or double-flowering.



CHRISTMAS FLOWERING

These varieties are cultivated in the warmer Southern Hemisphere and will bloom in four to six weeks of being potted. Their large blooms can present as single or double-flowering.



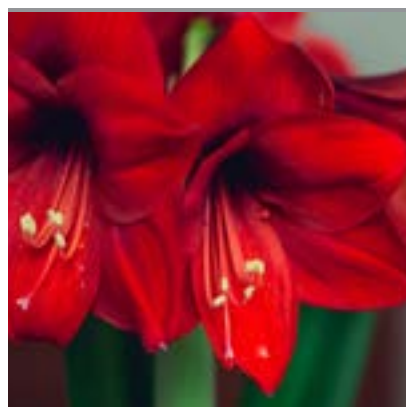
SPECIALTY ORNAMENTALS

These varieties typically come from the Southern Hemisphere and include Trumpet (single, lily-like outward facing blooms), Cybister (anemone-like spiky blooms), Exotic and Miniature cultivars.





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There are more than
90 species of Amaryllis
and over 600 hybrid
varieties





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“...in the tedium
of winter, the
scarlet blaze of
an amaryllis.”

”

SHIRA ATIK

“Amaryllis.” *Midwest Quarterly*, vol. 62, no. 4, July 2021, p. 359

How to grow Amaryllis indoors

These gentle giants of the bulbous plants are a breeze to 'force' or make bloom indoors.

Although it is simplest to purchase a high-quality bulb that has already been potted for you, there is a charming satisfaction in planting a fresh bulb into a pot yourself. Here are the steps:

1.) Begin with the largest Amaryllis bulb you can get your hands on, preferably one that is at least 30 centimeters in circumference or larger. Be sure to choose a fresh bulb that is firm without mold or soft spots.

Remember, the larger the bulb, the more shoots it will produce and ultimately, more blooms. Bulbs less than 28 cm wide will produce one, maybe two

stems, while 38 cm bulbs have the potential to produce 3 or 4 stems. With four to six blooms per stem, you can imagine the show that the 38 cm bulb will put on in full bloom!

Before you plant, soak the bottom of your bulb in room temperature water for 30 minutes to one hour to encourage root development.

2.) Next, select a pot or vessel that is around six to eight inches wide. You do not want much more than 1 inch of space between the bulb and the inside wall of the vessel if possible. (If you only have large pots, you can plant three or more bulbs snugly together, but not touching, in the same pot for a dramatic effect.) Choose a heavy pot made of terra cotta, metal or stone to ensure that the plant does not tip over when fully grown.



If your pot has a drainage hole, line the bottom of the pot with a coffee filter and fill it with one inch of pebbles to assist with drainage. If your pot does not have a drainage hole, place a thin layer of [activated charcoal](#) on the bottom of the pot before adding soil to absorb excess water and prevent root rot.

3.) Place a small scoop of fresh, sterile potting mix or homemade potting mix (see recipe at right) in the pot, then set the soaked bulb on top. Gently surround the bulb with the potting mix until 2/3rds of the bulb is covered, leaving the top portion of the bulb and neck exposed (see image on previous page).

4.) Water well around the bulb (not over the top of the bulb) and let drain. You will not need to water again until green growth begins to emerge, then water only when the soil is dry to the touch. The regularity of watering will vary on your plant's environment and humidity levels.

When leaves begin to form, start a fertilizer regimen with a soluble [liquid plant fertilizer](#) once every two weeks.

5.) Place your potted Amaryllis in a warm, sunny window and rotate frequently to encourage straight stems and leaves.

When flowers bloom, move the pot out of direct sunlight to discourage fading.

6.) Once flowers have withered, place the pot back into a warm sunny spot to encourage a new growth cycle.

Make Your Own Potting Mix:

- 2 parts loam
- 1 part leaf mold or peat moss
- 1/2 part well-decayed manure
- 1 handful of sand
- 1 handful of bone meal

(Wyman's Gardening Encyclopedia, MacMillan, 1971)



Which Amaryllis is right for me?

Ease

PRE-POTTED

If you would like the simplest option, choose an Amaryllis that has been pre-potted by your local flower farm, florist or garden center. These companies will have access to the highest quality plants and know the proper way to pot up the bulbs to ensure the best outcome.

Look for very large, high quality bulbs and avoid the big-box stores if possible. Some reputable online sources such as White Flower Farm and John Scheepers are good options if you cannot buy locally.

Timing

WEEKS TO BLOOM

Fresh bulbs are most readily available in October.

If you would like to pot your own Amaryllis and want blooms in 4 to 8 weeks, choose bulbs from countries in the Southern Hemisphere, such as Peru and South Africa.

If you want the largest bulbs available and are willing to wait 10 to 12 weeks for blooms, choose bulbs from countries in the Northern Hemisphere, such as the Netherlands.

Display

FAVORED VARIETIES

There are so many varieties of Amaryllis it is hard to choose just one. Here are some tried-and-true varieties:

- Dutch
 - the Nymph Series (Various)
 - Spartacus (Candy-striped)
 - Bolero (Raspberry)
 - Christmas Gift (White)

- Peru
 - Double King (Red)
 - Mandela (Burgundy)
 - Denver (White)
 -

How to rebloom your Amaryllis

Many people find that their Amaryllis only blooms once. Read on to fix this problem:

- 1.) Once the blooms have withered, remove the stalk at the base leaving a short stump, but do not cut any leaves. Be sure to keep the plant in a warm spot with plenty of sun.
- 2.) One of the most important steps that growers skip is the regular watering and fertilizing of their Amaryllis during its energy-building days. You must continue this process to ensure that your plant will bloom again. Water only when the soil is dry to the touch and fertilize every two weeks up to one month at a time.
- 3.) Your Amaryllis needs a dormancy period to recharge. When September rolls around, move your pot away from its warm sunny spot, reduce the

watering (don't let it dry out) and fertilizing and let it sit in a cooler, dark spot until November. You will notice leaves withering and possibly dying --this is okay.

- 4.) In November, it is time to wake your bulb up again and resume the growing process. Move it back to a warm sunny spot and begin again your watering and fertilizing sequence. You can cut away dead leaves, but leave new growth.
- 5.) You will soon see new stems emerge and eventually new buds. Be sure to regularly rotate your pot for symmetrical growth and to discourage leaning.

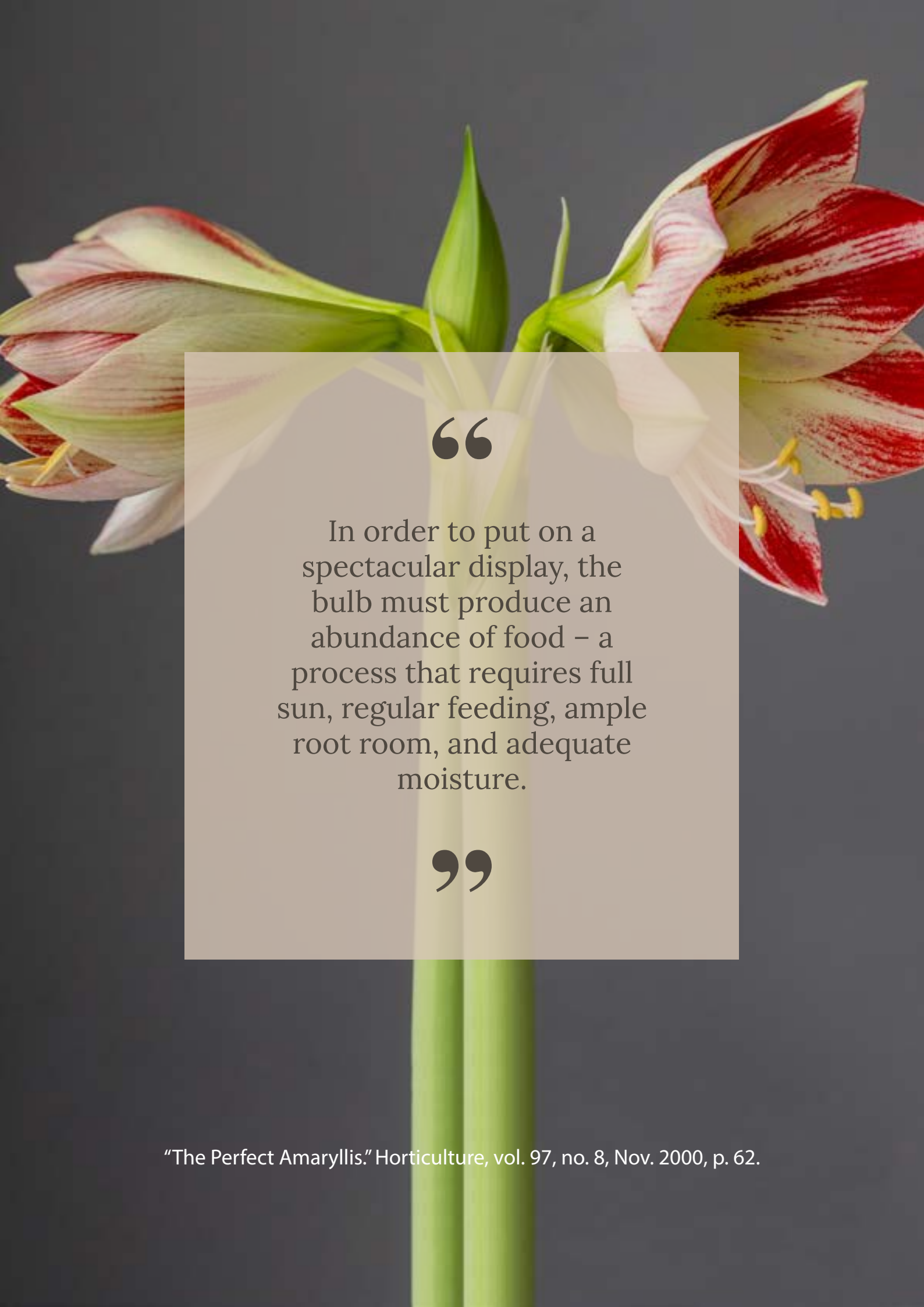
Your Amaryllis should be in bloom in about four to eight weeks! If you continue this cycle of feeding, watering and allowing rest, your bulb could continue its growth cycle for decades or more.



Note:

Amaryllis do not typically like their roots to be disturbed during their growth cycle. Be sure not to repot them while they have new growth.

You may find that bulbs have outgrown their original pots within about 3 years. The best time to repot your Amaryllis with fresh soil during its Fall dormancy period.



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In order to put on a spectacular display, the bulb must produce an abundance of food – a process that requires full sun, regular feeding, ample root room, and adequate moisture.

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“The Perfect Amaryllis.” Horticulture, vol. 97, no. 8, Nov. 2000, p. 62.

How to grow Amaryllis outside



Some expert growers combine indoor and outdoor conditions to optimize Amaryllis quality.

1.) Once the blooms have withered, remove the stalk at the base leaving a short stump, but do not cut any leaves.

2.) Amaryllis do not like cold weather. When fear of frost has subsided, move your bulbs to a warm, sunny spot outdoors in the garden.

Dig a hole slightly larger than your bulb and sprinkle bone meal into the base of the hole. Place your bulb into the hole and cover the bulb up to its neck in soil.

3.) Regularly water and fertilize your bulb with tomato fertilizer throughout the spring and summer.

If you live in Zone 9 or higher, you can leave the Amaryllis outdoors and allow it to naturalize.

4.) All other zones will need to bring the Amaryllis indoors in the fall. In September, carefully dig up your bulb and pot it in fresh soil. Allow it to rest in a dark place indoors until you are ready to begin the growth process again in November.

Gifting Amaryllis

A gift that potentially keeps on giving year after year, Amaryllis makes an incredible gift for the flower lovers and gardeners in your life. (Be sure to share this handy guide!)

Aside from giving fresh bulbs, there are a multitude of ways to present Amaryllis as gifts. Read on for a few great ideas.



Place a fresh bulb in a glass container and fill with rocks. Add water until the roots of the bulb are covered. Top with moss.



Coat the bulb in a thick colorful wax and watch it grow on its own without water!

Note: Bulbs treated in wax will not be able to rebloom.

GIFT IDEAS



Share stems from your own Amaryllis collection and place in a gorgeous vase. Blooms will last up to two weeks in fresh water.

Last Words & Resources

Thank you for
downloading this free
growing guide.

We have greatly enjoyed the opportunity to share with you our expertise and enthusiasm about one of our very favorite flowers. We hope this guide has both informed and inspired you to go out and experiment with the incredible Amaryllis.

Resources

The information presented in this guide is a combination of personal experience and careful research. For a full list of our research sources, please email us at info@okcutflowerco.com.

Recommended reading:

[*Amaryllis*](#), by Starr Ockenga

[*Complete Guide to Companion Planting: Everything You Need to Know to Make Your Garden & Ornamental Plants Thrive*](#), by Dale Mayer (Chapter 11)

[*Complete Guide to Creating Windowsill Plants: Everything You Need to Know Explained Simply*](#), by Donna M. Murphy and Angela Williams Duea



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We love to educate gardeners and flower lovers, and we offer our locally grown flowers through a seasonal bouquet subscription, workshops and more.

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