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How to Grow Amaryllis: The Compete Amaryllis Flower Guide



Amaryllis blooming for Christmas

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Planting, Growing, and Caring for Amaryllis

By [Catherine Boeckmann](#)

Last Updated: December 5, 2024



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Did you grow amaryllis bulbs over
Christmas? How do you care for this plant
after it finishes blooming? See our plant
guide on caring for amaryllis and what to
do after the flowers fade.

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About Amaryllis

Like daffodils or tulips, the amaryllis plant starts out as a bulb—often sold as part of a kit containing the bulb, a heavy pot, and some growing medium (ideally, a sterile, soilless planting mix). They are naturally spring-blooming bulbs, producing flowers at some point between late winter and mid-spring (February to April in the Northern Hemisphere). However, amaryllis are commonly forced to bloom earlier in winter, in time for the winter holidays.

1. Select a healthy bulb. 2. Plant the bulb in a pot. 3. Water the bulb. 4. Place the pot in a cool, dark place. 5. Wait for the bulb to sprout. 6. Move the pot to a bright, sunny location. 7. Water the plant regularly. 8. Enjoy the flowers!

with the energy they'll need to bloom again in the following spring. With the arrival of autumn, the leaves die back, and the bulb goes dormant until later winter when the blooming process begins anew.

Amaryllis ... or Not?

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Historically, there has been some confusion regarding the name of this plant.

Most amaryllis varieties grown today are hybrids and are not "true amaryllis"; they are instead part of the genus

Hippeastrum, which is native to tropical parts of South America, from Brazil to the

Africa and are also known as belladonna lilies (despite not being [true lilies](#)). That being said, both *Hippeastrum* and *Amaryllis* are part of the amaryllis family, so they are all amaryllis in some sense!

The name “amaryllis” comes from the Greek word *amarysso*, which means “to sparkle.”



Read Next

- [How to Grow Lilies: The Complete Lily Flower Guide](#)
- [How to Keep Christmas Plants Thriving \(After the Holidays!\)](#)
- [Forcing Bulbs Indoors for Early Spring Flowers!](#)

PLANTING

Buying Amaryllis Bulbs

When shopping for amaryllis bulbs, you can buy the boxed kits that contain a bulb, a pot, and some soil. These make a nice gift, though there are usually not a lot of color choices—generally, they offer red, pink, and white. The flowers are usually the smaller variety, though they should bloom just fine if you follow directions.

Some garden centers offer larger bare bulbs that give you more choices of variety and larger sizes, and each one usually produces two or more flower spikes. Each spike will produce two to four large, trumpet-shaped blossoms.

Amaryllis bulbs are classified by size, which is determined by measuring around the outside of the bulb at its widest point. Generally, the larger the bulb, the more flowers the plant is capable of producing.

Another good reason for choosing a bare bulb is that you can see the condition of the bulb without having to rummage

should have some fairly long fleshy roots attached, too.

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How to Plant Amaryllis Bulbs

- If you can't put the bulb in a pot right away, store it in a cool, dry, dark place

- Amaryllis bulbs may not bloom if they are in too large a pot. There should be no more than 1 inch of space on each side of the bulb, and 1/3 of the bulb should be above the soil line. They prefer to be a bit cramped (pot-bound).
- Use a [well-draining potting mix](#).
- Before planting, soak the bulb's roots in lukewarm water for a few hours to rehydrate them.
- Put a layer of soil in the bottom of the pot and position the bulb so the top sticks up above the rim of the pot. Firm the soil around the edge, exposing the top third of the bulb. If planted too deeply, the bulb may rot.
- Place the pot in a bright spot and water, but be wary of overwatering. Allow the soil to dry a bit between waterings.
- Expect beautiful, lily-like blooms in 6 to 8 weeks.

Tip: For a continuous display, start a few bulbs at 2-week intervals. As one finishes

GROWING

How to Care for Amaryllis Bulbs

- Display the amaryllis away from drafts in a bright room, but not in direct sunlight.
- Amaryllis plants prefer temperatures in the range of 60° to 70°F (15.5° to 21°C). Keep them away from freezing windows and drying radiators.
- Water sparingly. Only water when the top inch of potting mix is dry, taking care not to get water on the neck of the bulb.
- To promote blooming, use a house-plant fertilizer with high phosphorus content.
- When the flower stalk appears, move the amaryllis into brighter sunlight. Turn the pot every several days for even lighting and to prevent leaning.
- If the stalk starts to lean, insert a stake next to it, taking care not to disturb

- Once your amaryllis is blooming, you can move it to a cooler location out of direct sunlight to make the blossoms last longer.
- After the flowers have faded, cut them off to prevent seed formation. Cut the stem off at the top of the bulb.
- Grow the amaryllis as a foliage plant through the spring and summer until the leaves turn yellow. Then, store the potted bulb on its side in a cool, dark room or basement to rest for 8 to 10 weeks. See more “post-bloom” tips below.



How to Care for Amaryllis After Flowering

amaryllis has finished flowering, how can I get it to bloom again?" Those bulbs can take center stage again next Christmas if given proper care!

After blossoming, the bulb must grow and store food for the next season's bloom. Often, the bulbs actually shrink in size from the stress of blooming and will need time to recover lost nutrients.

Once the blossoms have faded, cut off the flower stalk, but keep the leaves growing by placing the pot in a warm, sunny spot. Water regularly and fertilize weekly with a balanced houseplant fertilizer. This is when next year's buds are formed within the bulb.

It takes a minimum of four leaves to produce one flower stalk because the buds form in the axils of every fourth bulb scale. Keep the plant growing all summer long; you can even move it outside for the summer. Bring it in at the end of August and cut OFF the watering. Let it dry out to induce a period of dormancy. Put the pot in a cool (around 50°F), dark place. Pull off any dried-up leaves.

To induce flowering in time for [Christmas](#), bring the plant into a warm, sunny location and resume watering around in early to mid-November.

We would recommend repotting at this time to give the bulb better soil. Or, if you don't feel like it, just scrape off the top 2 inches or so of loose soil and replace it with fresh soil. In about 6 to 8 weeks, the amaryllis should be in full bloom again.



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What About Waxed Amaryllis Bulbs?

Waxed bulbs are intended for single use.

They have all they need to bloom, but after that, they are meant to be discarded.

Also, if a flower stalk itself is fading, often one or two more will start to grow; if desired, you can cut off the fading flower stalk to encourage more growth. (Leave any leaves, though.)

Once flowering has completed, instead of discarding the bulb, you can try to gently remove the wax (avoid disturbing the brown outer layer of the bulb as best you can). Sometimes, the bulb will have plastic wrap underneath the wax, and/or a wire base inserted into the bottom of the bulb; if so, then you want to carefully remove these also. Then, plant the bulb in a pot (not too large—about 1 to 2 inches wider than the bulb, and with drainage holes) filled with potting soil and set in bright indirect light in a warm area; water sparingly. Make sure that the top 1/3 of the bulb sticks above the soil. Follow care instructions as you would for a regular bulb (as mentioned in the article above).

Types

- **‘Liberty’**: rich, velvet red petals on 20-

- **'Samba'**: red and white flowers with ruffled inner petals
- **'Susan'** (also called **'Dutch Belle'**): rosy-pink blooms with green throats

GARDENING PRODUCTS



PESTS/DISEASES

When grown as a houseplant, careful inspection when purchasing bulbs and proper care will prevent most insect pests as well as diseases.

WIT AND WISDOM

- The Victorians associated the amaryllis with strength and determination because of its height and sturdiness.
- Many of the holiday amaryllis varieties belong to the *Hippeastrum* genus and are native to South America.

FLOWERS

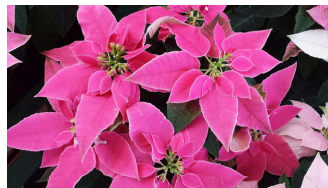
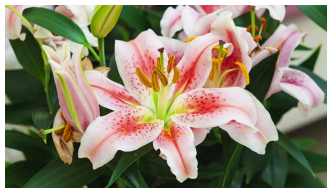
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Catherine Boeckmann



Catherine Boeckmann loves nature, stargazing, and gardening so it's not surprising that she and The Old Farmer's Almanac found each other. She leads digital content for the Almanac website, and is also a certified master gardener in the state of Indiana. [Read More from Catherine Boeckmann](#)

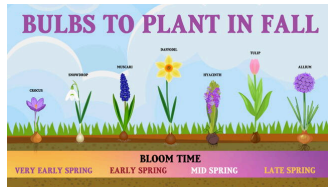
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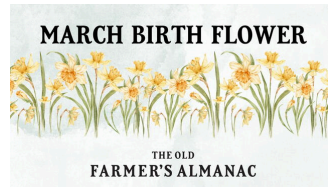
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COMMENTS

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Wendy (not verified) 4 months 3 weeks ago

Late this past summer my uncle gave me a big container of amaryllis, which were starts from bulbs passed down from my grandmother. The original bulbs belonged to my great grand aunt Venie, she passed away in 1943 at the age of 77. My uncle passed last month, but he kept the containers outside during the summer and brought inside during winter as a house plant. He said his mother would sometimes store the bare bulbs in the root cellar over winter. I know these bulbs are probably not the same as can be purchased now and was wondering if the care is the same as modern bulbs. I've been entrusted with the care of these legacy bulbs and want them to thrive! They are blooming now and are a beautiful coral color.

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[REPLY](#)

The Editors 4 months 3 weeks ago

Hi Wendy,

Thank you for sharing your story!

These plants sound like a very special part of your family history.

It is hard to say based on your description if these bulbs are what we typically refer to as amaryllis (native to South America), which are hybrids in the genus *Hippeastrum*, or a true amaryllis, also known as belladonna lilies, from South Africa, or something else in the amaryllis family. The hybrids that you can buy today were first developed in the 19th century.

You should certainly follow the care tips that your uncle passed along, but it might be best to take some pictures of your plants that are in bloom now and contact your local cooperative extension. There will be someone there that you can discuss them with who will have knowledge of what the

Here is a list of the cooperative extensions in each state to help find the one to best contact.

<https://www.almanac.com/cooperative-extension-services>

Hope this helps and good luck with caring for these special plants!

REPLY

Kathy (not verified) 6 months 1 week ago

I just bought my amaryllis and its leaves are beautiful green. It has about seven babies. Should I repo all or wait til after dormancy. Thank you

REPLY

Helen (not verified) 8 months 1 week ago

My amaryllis has bloomed twice and seems to love its window. It's sending out lots of leaves and seems to be developing a new bulb on each side. My neighbor asked for one. Can I detach

REPLY**The Editors** 8 months 1 week ago

Hi Helen,

You can certainly divide the new bulbs (offsets or bulblets) from your amaryllis, but there are a few guidelines to follow. You should wait until the offsets are at least 1/3 the size of the mother bulb before removing.

The ideal time to remove offsets is any time after the foliage has died back and before the bulb breaks dormancy. To divide offsets, lift the entire plant from its container, being careful not to damage the bulb or roots. This is why you want to do it during the dormancy period. Gently remove the soil from around the bulb and roots then separate the bulblets by pulling them downward or twisting carefully. You can also use a sharp knife to gently pry them off. Each off-

any smaller offsets attached to the main bulb so they can continue to grow.

Replant offsets immediately in pots—containing a well-balanced potting mix—at least 2 inches larger than the diameter of the bulblets. Make sure to leave the top third of the offset above the soil line. You will also want to replant the mother bulb in the same pot, or repot into a slightly larger container, if desired. There should be a maximum of 2 inches of space between the bulb and the side of the container.

The pot with the offset should be placed in a sunny window and watered regularly to keep the soil evenly moist but not waterlogged.

Hope this helps!

REPLY

I was late in removing my Amyrillas flower stems this year. there was a white pod formed on the stem. In side each there was multiple black disk, thinner than paper. They would blow in the wind. Are these the seeds? If so what is the step by step process to try and grow them?

REPLY

The Editors 9 months 1 week ago

Yes, the black papery husks contain the seeds. (Seeds of certain amaryllis varieties will be sterile.) If you plant viable seed, they may not produce a plant the looks like the momma plant. Usually, amaryllis is propagated by offsets or cuttings, to maintain the same characteristics. But if you'd like to try planting the seeds, here are some guidelines:

Although eliminating the seed pods before they mature can help reserve energy in the plant for more flowers,

is pollinated (you can do this by hand, using a brush to transfer pollen from the stamen of one amaryllis to the pistil of another one; each plant can self-pollinate, but you might have less satisfactory results).

When the pods turn yellow-brown and split open, harvest the black, papery seeds inside. Spread them out to dry for a day or so, and then sow them in flats, with the seeds on their edge (just a bit poking above the medium), in well-draining, moist, seed-starting mix, covering them very lightly. Cover the flat with clear plastic or glass to maintain humidity and place in part shade; soil should be about 70 to 75 degrees F. (Some gardeners germinate the seeds by floating them in water; when they form roots, plant them in seed-starting mix.)

Alternatively, if weather is warm, you can sow seeds outside in part shade;

When the seeds germinate (in 4 or so weeks), gradually give the seedlings more light until eventually they are in full sun. Transplant each seedling to a larger (3-inch) pot with light potting soil when the second set of leaves forms and roots develop. Fertilize with half-strength, balanced liquid fertilizer solution every other week. Water to keep moist but not wet. Plant out in one year. The plants will mature and flower in 2 to 5 years, on average.

REPLY

Gayle (not verified) 9 months 4 weeks ago

I put my 5 amaryllis bulbs (that hadn't bloomed in 3 years) outside in full sun in last April. One has now bloomed mid June and is now blooming again July 4. Another one is about to bloom. What do I do with them now? Leave them outside till fall then bring them in? Put them in darkness so they go dormant?

The Editors 9 months 3 weeks ago

See the directions about for
“after bloom”:

Bring it in at the end of August and
cut OFF the watering. Let it dry out
to induce a period of dormancy. Put
the pot in a cool (around
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n>), dark place. Pull off any dried-up leaves.

REPLY

Jamie (not verified) 10 months 3 weeks ago

I received my Amaryllis for Mothers day and it came with the bulb in a wax covering. Literally wax. The instructions stated no need for soil or water. It bloomed mid May. The flowers are slowly starting to die off. Can I also expect to have this reflower if I take care of it properly? Should I take out of the wax and place in a pot? It is a very beautiful flower but does not seem to bloom for long. Then again, I do not have an abundance of sunlight hitting my living area. Please advise and thank you for your time.

REPLY

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