



Amaryllis Lily is the Star of Winter Blooms

by Kent County Master Gardener Linda Newsome

Nothing brightens a home better than houseplants that bloom during the dull winter months. The Amaryllis Lily is the star of these winter blooming plants. Large colorful flowers burst open atop tall stalks that are surrounded by long green leaves. The flowers last a long time with very little attention. Just provide sunlight and a little water.

Amaryllis lilies come to market in the fall in time for a Christmas show. You can purchase them from local nurseries, from catalogs, and even from grocery stores. You can purchase individual bulbs or a kit that contains everything you need to



Sussex County Master Gardener Linda Peters Photo

get the bulb to bloom. The flowers come in many different colors. Some varieties are striped.

Many people discard the bulb after the flowers fade. However, it is quite easy to get Amaryllis Lilies to bloom year after year. The process is easy. Once the flowers die, cut the stalk about

Planting the Bulb

Plant the bulb in good potting soil, leaving 1/3 of the bulb above the soil.

The pot should be slightly bigger than the bulb. There should be about 1-inch of space between the bulb and the edge of the pot all the way around. This ensures that the bulb will be held firmly in place by the roots so it can support the tall stalk and large flowers.

Water once and set the pot in a sunny location.

When the leaves begin to sprout, start watering regularly, but sparingly. Too much water will cause the bulb to rot.

The flowers will appear in 6 to 8 weeks.

After the flowers fade, it is quite easy to get the Amaryllis Lilies to bloom year after year.

1-inch from the top of the bulb. Do not cut the leaves. They make food for the bulb so that it will flower the next year. Continue to keep the pot in the sun and water when the soil is dry. The pot may be moved outdoors in the early summer when the nighttime temperatures are consistently 50 degrees or above. I bury my pots in a shady spot in my garden and leave them there until the fall.

When the leaves begin to yellow, it's time to remove the bulb from its pot. Cut the leaves 1-2 inches above the bulb. Any loose paper-thin layers around the bulb may also be removed. Place the bulb on newspaper for a day or two so it can dry out. Then place it in a paper bag and store in a cool, dry, dark place like a cellar or a garage. The back of a closet will do as well. This forces the bulb into a state of dormancy.

The great thing about Amaryllis Lilies is that you can choose the bloom time. Keep the bulb dormant for at least 8 weeks. Longer is fine depending on when you want your flowers to bloom. Just plant the bulb, following the steps above, 6 to 8 weeks before you want to see flowers. If you have more than one bulb, you can stagger the planting time by extending the weeks of dormancy, so you have flowers through the winter.

Each fall, as you prepare your bulb for dormancy, you will notice that the bulb has grown larger. It will be able to support more than one flower stalk and there will be more flowers on each stalk. Thin flower stakes may be helpful at this point. You may also see offsets or new bulbs growing out of the main bulb. Keep the offset attached and allow it to grow leaves. It probably won't flower the first year, but you can separate it after the next dormant period and give it its own pot. These small bulbs make excellent gifts for friends.

Like most gardeners, once you have successfully gotten your first bulb to re-bloom, it's easy to purchase a second in a different color; and, before you know it, a lovely collection has been created. I have six bulbs now. I hope you will try to re-bloom an Amaryllis Lily. Whether you have one bulb or many, you will enjoy its beauty from year to year and take pride in your new gardening skill.

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References

Amaryllis: How to grow Amaryllis Bulbs. <https://www.gardeners.com/how-to/amaryllis-care/5410.html>

Amaryllis Care Instructions:

<https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/ornamental/bulbs/amaryllis-hippeastrum/amaryllis-care-instructions-how-to-care-for-an-amaryllis.htm>



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DSU Website- <https://cast.desu.edu/cooperative-extension/agriculture-natural-resources/delaware-master-gardeners>