



Bulb “Forcing”

Spring bulbs “forced” to flower in mid-winter are special attractions. A pot of bulbs can brighten your kitchen or dining room table. They also make a nice gift during the holidays. Among our selection of bulbs, we have some *pre-cooled* Amaryllis, Hyacinths, and Paperwhites that are well adapted for forcing.

What is Bulb Forcing?

Coaxing may be a better way to describe the un-seasonal growth and blooming of bulbs indoors. When you are forcing bulbs, you are simulating the natural effect of winter that causes bulbs to bloom in spring. The result is flowers that bloom earlier for indoor displays in winter.

Bulb Forcing Steps

1. Plant bulbs in a pot of well draining potting soil (ie. *David Hunter’s Potting Soil*) and water them.
OR
Use a vase or glass container. Place stones around the bulbs to provide stability then fill to the base of the bulbs with water.
2. Place pot or vase in a cool, dark location such as a cupboard or garage. Add water when soil begins to dry or water level drops in vase.
3. Once the green shoots have formed a flower bud at the tip (usually after 6-8 weeks) bring the container inside to a bright location. Rotate the pot regularly to prevent the plant from leaning towards the light. Continue watering and enjoy the beautiful blooms!



You do not have to fertilize during this process, the bulb has all the food it needs stored inside.

Note: To avoid the common problems of leggy Paperwhites not being able to support their own blooms you may replace the water in the container with a mixture of water and 5% alcohol (*2 1/2 teaspoons of rubbing alcohol per 1 cup of water*) once they have sprouted a 1 to 2 inch shoot. This prevents the stems from becoming too long to support the blooms but will not alter the size of the blooms or shorten the bloom time.

How to Get Your Amaryllis to Re-Bloom

After Flowering Tips

- Feed the bulb and let it go dormant for a period of time. Producing the tremendous blooms uses up all the previously stored energy.
- The plant now requires plenty of water, fertilizer and sunshine so the long leaves can carry on the process of photosynthesis and replenish the bulb's food supply.
- Remove the flower stems and place the plant in a sunny window.
- Water when the soil is dry to the touch and fertilize twice a month to promote healthy foliage. The more leaves produced means more flower stalks next winter.
- Pots can be moved outside in late May. Start in the shade so the foliage does not burn. Gradually move the bulb so that it can receive at least 4 hours of sunshine per day. You can remove the bulb from its container and plant it directly into the garden. Ensure you are very gentle as the fleshy roots resent rough handling. You can also leave the bulb in its pot and sink directly into a bed.
- Continue to water and feed the bulb regularly throughout the summer dormancy
- Leaves will begin to turn yellow and die back by late August. This is the beginning of the bulb's dormant stage.
- Stop watering and fertilizing.
- Lay the pot on its side so rain won't moisten the soil. If the bulb is in the ground, dig it up.
- Dry the bulb completely in the shed or garage.
- Bring the bulb inside before the first hard frost.
- Cut off all the dead leaves and store it, still in its pot or loose, in a dark, cool basement (about 13°C) for approximately 2 months.

Revival

- 6-8 weeks before you want your Amaryllis to flower again, bring it out of its resting place.
- Remove the top 2.5 cm of soil with a spoon and add a fresh soilless mix or re-pot the bulb if it summered directly in the garden.
- Water the bulb well and follow the rest of the initial planting instructions. If it doesn't re-flower give it another year to gather enough strength to re-bloom. Another reason an Amaryllis may not bloom again is if its roots have been disturbed too often.
- Re-pot only when the bulb looks really crowded (about every 3-4 years). Do this after the dormancy period at the start of the new growth period.