



# FORCING SOME BULBS INTO BLOOM



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**we**<sup>®</sup>



# FORCING SPRING FLOWERING BULBS

## SELECTION

- Pre-chilled bulbs
  - Bulbs labeled for forcing
    - Usually shorter varieties
    - Any will work
  - Healthy, pest free
  - Bulbs you didn't get planted
  - Major bulbs - larger flowers need fewer for bigger impact
    - **Tulips**
    - Daffodils
    - **Hyacinths**
    - Alliums
  - Minor bulbs - smaller flowers and size, need more for bigger impact
    - Combine nicely with major bulbs
      - ◆ Filler, extend bloom time, provide layers of color
- |                  |                         |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| ◉ Crocus         | ◉ Glory of the Snow     |
| ◉ Squills        | ◉ Winter Aconite        |
| ◉ Grape Hyacinth | ◉ Snowdrops             |
| ◉ Iris           | ◉ <i>Anemone blanda</i> |

## ADDITIONAL SUPPLIES

- Well-drained potting mix
- Container with drainage holes
  - Attractive vs. functional
  - Recycled or new plastic pots work great for forcing
    - ◆ Dress them up in spring by setting them in a decorative pot or sinking into window boxes
  - Use attractive pots that showcase your plantings and fit your landscape design
  - Make sure the pots can tolerate cold conditions

## Utility-friendly Tree Planting Tips from We Energies

Trees growing too close to power lines can cause sparks, fires, power outages and shock hazards. To avoid these problems, plant trees that won't interfere with power lines when fully grown. Small ornamental trees or shrubs that will not exceed 15 feet in height such as serviceberry, dogwood and low-growing evergreens are best to plant around power lines. Trees such as maple, basswood, burr oak, white pine or spruce grow more than 40 feet high and should be planted more than 50 feet from any overhead power lines.

And don't forget to call 811 at least three days before planting to check the location of underground services.

Learn more utility-friendly planting tips at [we-energies.com](http://we-energies.com).





## PLANTING TIPS

- Chill bulbs packed in peat moss for 15 weeks
  - Plant directly in window boxes and outdoor containers in spring
  - Set on stones in glass vases or jars
- Monoculture plantings - use one type of bulbs
  - Place potting mix on the bottom of the container
  - Pack the container full of the selected bulbs
  - Cover bulbs with potting mix and fill to within 1/2" of the top of the container
- **Layered planting** - use a variety of bulbs for various heights and bloom times
  - Place potting mix on the bottom of the container
  - Plant the larger bulbs at the lowest level
  - Cover these with potting mix
  - Place medium sized bulbs on the next layer above the previously planted bulbs
  - Cover with potting mix
  - Place the smallest bulbs closest to the surface. Cover these with several inches of potting mix
- Plant bulbs with pointed end (if they have one) up and root plate down - don't worry, even those bulbs planted upside down will grow
- Place tulip bulbs with flat-side out for best display
  - First leaf forms on that side helps support flowers and dress up display
    - ◆ No mass of leaves in middle of pot
- **Top with grass seed for fun**

## CARE

- Water thoroughly after planting bulbs
- Place potted bulbs in cool location (35-45°) for 15 weeks
  - Sinking the pot in the ground outdoors
  - Placing the pot in an unheated garage (colder regions) away from door - place on wood board and further insulate the container with items found in your garage if needed or Styrofoam cooler
  - Chill in extra refrigerator - be sure to keep them away from apples and other fruit that give off ethylene that can negatively impact flowering

## Landscaping Around We Energies Utilities

Plants and other landscaping features can interfere with utility equipment and cause safety risks. Remember to:

**Maintain equipment visibility:** Use techniques that camouflage rather than hide utility equipment. Hearty grasses and/or flowers are preferred. They provide aesthetic improvements and grow back quickly should equipment access be necessary.

**Ensure easy access:** When fencing is used, choose a split-rail type, which can be easily dismantled when equipment access is needed. Be sure fences are located more than 3 feet from transformer sides and no permanent fence post is located in front of transformer door.

**Keep proper clearance:** When woody shrubs or bushes are used, place them more than 3 feet from transformer sides and more than 10 feet from its door. Keep future growth in mind for the size of shrubs or bushes.

Learn more utility-friendly planting tips at [we-energies.com](http://we-energies.com).



- Other creative ideas from fellow gardeners
  - ◆ Preformed water garden - empty for winter, set in bulbs, add straw and cover with plywood
- Moisten soil if it dries in storage

## FLOWERING

- Move out of cold storage
  - Into a cool, bright location indoors
  - Or outdoors
- Flowers appear in about 3 to 4 weeks indoors
- Those set outside flower around the time those outdoors bloom
  - Depending on location
- Stake for support
  - Twigs, metal supports, be creative

## ONCE THE FLOWERS FADE

- **Extend the Life of Forced Bulbs**
- **Caring for Potted Tulips, Daffodils, Hyacinths and Other Spring Flowering Bulbs Once the Flowers Fade**
- Treat forced bulbs like houseplants
  - Remove spent flowers
  - Water thoroughly when top few inches start to dry
  - Fertilize with a dilute solution of flowering plant fertilizer
  - **Moving Forced Bulbs Outdoors**
- Plant outdoors after danger of frost or store in a cool, dark location until fall
  - These bulbs may not bloom until the 2<sup>nd</sup> spring after planting
  - Forced hybrid tulips and hyacinths may never bloom again
- Compost
  - You'll be returning the bulbs to the garden in a different form



### About Melinda

Nationally known gardening expert, TV/ radio host, author & columnist Melinda Myers has over 30 years of horticulture experience and has written over 20 gardening books, including *Can't Miss Small Space Gardening*, the *Midwest Gardener's Handbook*, and *Jackson and Perkins' Beautiful Roses Made Easy*. She hosts the nationally-syndicated "Melinda's Garden Moment" program airing on over 115 TV and radio stations throughout the U.S. Melinda also hosts the internationally distributed *Great Courses "How to Grow Anything"* DVD series, including the latest *Food Gardening for Everyone* DVD set. She is a columnist and contributing editor for *Birds & Blooms* magazine, writes the twice monthly "Gardeners' Questions" newspaper column and a nationally-distributed gardening column. She appears regularly as a guest expert on national and local television and radio shows.



## **PAPERWHITES (*Narcissus*)**

- **Growing and Forcing Paperwhites to Bloom Indoors**
- These do not need a cold period to flower

### **PLANTING**

- In soil
  - Quality potting mix
  - Container with drainage holes
  - Place an inch or so of potting mix on bottom of container
  - Set bulbs in place so top of bulb will be exposed
  - Fill container with potting mix to 1/2" below lip of pot
  - Water thoroughly and often enough to keep soil slightly moist
- In sterile pea gravel, marbles, stones...
  - Select a container without drainage holes
  - Fill most of the container with stone or marbles
  - Set bulbs in place
  - Cover the bulbs with enough additional stones for support
  - Maintain the water level just below the bottom of the bulb

### **ROOTING**

- Move container to cool location (45-60°) for roots to develop
- Move to a cool, bright location as soon as leaves begin to sprout

### **PREVENT FLOPPING**

- Growing in a cool location
- Stake for support
- Cornell research
  - Replace water when bulbs 2" high with mixture of one cup of an 80 proof (40% alcohol) liquor with seven cups water to create a 5% solution which will stunt bulb growth by 30-50%



# AMARYLLIS

## SELECTION

- Firm, blemish free bulbs
- In general the bigger the bulb, the more flowers produced
- Southern Hemisphere bulbs (Peru)
  - Labeled EARLY or HOLIDAY for flowering
  - **Selecting Amaryllis that Will Bloom for Christmas**
  - Plant by early November for holiday blooms
- Northern Hemisphere bulbs (Holland)
  - Bloom between January and March
  - **Why Your Amaryllis Didn't Bloom for the Holidays**
- Extend your enjoyment
  - Use both Northern and Southern Hemisphere varieties
  - Use several different Northern Hemisphere varieties
    - ✦ Stagger planting of these by 3-4 weeks
    - ✦ **When Will Your Amaryllis Bloom**

## PLANTING

### **Brighten Your Indoor Garden with Amaryllis**

#### **Forcing Amaryllis Into Bloom**

- In a quality potting mix
  - Select a container with drainage holes for greatest success
  - Single bulb in a container slightly larger than the bulb
    - ✦ 7-8" deep and 5-6" wide
  - Multiple bulbs in one pot
    - ✦ Several in a container large enough to accommodate them
  - Place several inches of potting mix on bottom of container
  - Set bulb on top of the planting mix so top  $\frac{1}{3}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  is exposed
  - Finish filling the pot with potting mix
  - Water well, after this sparingly until the bulbs begin to grow
- In stones
  - Select a watertight container (pot or vase)
  - Place several inches of stones at the bottom of the container
  - Set bulb on top of stones
  - Add additional stones to hold bulb in place (leaving at least  $\frac{1}{3}$  of bulb exposed)



- Fill with water until it just reaches the bottom of the bulb
- Maintain level just below the bottom of bulb
- Waxed bulbs
  - Place in bright, indirect light
  - Set on plate or tray
  - Do nothing but enjoy

### **FLOWERING**

- Be patient, it can take 4-12 weeks for bulbs to sprout
- Once the first sprout appears you will begin watering more frequently
  - Keep soil moist, not wet
- The flower stem usually appears first
  - The leaves begin to emerge when amaryllis is flowering
- Sometimes the leaves appear first and then the flower
- Turn the pot occasionally for more upright growth
- Extend flower life by moving to a cool location out of direct sunlight
  - Remove individual flowers as they fade

### **REBLOOMING**

- Grow your amaryllis in a sunny location with other houseplants
- Water when top few inches of potting mix are crumbling and just slightly moist
- Apply a dilute solution of flowering houseplant fertilizer (through mid summer)
- Summer
  - Keep it indoors
  - Move outdoors (those in Zone 7B and warmer can leave in garden year round)
- Late summer - early fall
  - Reduce watering and you should have already stopped fertilizing
  - Move indoors before the first fall frost
    - ◆ Place in cool, dark location until new growth begins
- OR grow year round indoors
  - Reduce watering and only fertilize spring through early summer as needed
  - When I summer my amaryllis outdoors and move it inside (no dormant treatment), I have had success getting my amaryllis to bloom twice in one year
- Compost and buy new varieties to try next winter

### **PLANTING AMARYLLIS SEEDS**

### **DIVIDING AMARYLLIS**



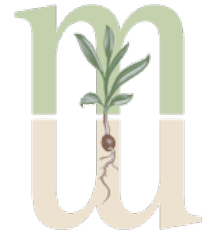
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Books

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