

## AMARYLLIS CARE GUIDE



Amaryllis is a subtropical bulb native to South Africa with large showy flowers that range in color from white to pinks, oranges and reds. Each flower lasts about 2 weeks but several flowers often appear in succession. It is grown here in Florida as a potted plant, growing well indoors, or it can be planted outdoors. Transplanting is best done in the winter months. Outdoors it will bloom in the spring before new leaves develop. The plant will persist year round in North Florida but the leaves may fade in late summer or die back during the winter, depending on the severity of the winter.

A potted Amaryllis bulb should be watered through, placed in bright light and not watered again until it sprouts. An unpotted bulb can be planted in moistened potting soil in a heavy pot with a drainage hole, allowing for an inch or two of soil around all sides of the bulb, leaving the top third of the bulb exposed. Once the bulb sprouts, place it where it will receive several hours of direct sun daily and increase watering. Allow it to dry between waterings though, to avoid rotting the bulb. When flowering begins, remove from direct sun to lengthen the bloom time. Once flowers fade, remove them to promote flowering in following years, and use a water soluble fertilizer to encourage the growth of the leaves. Indoors, bright indirect light is best for the remainder of the season.

Flower stalks can be heavy so if you keep your Amaryllis in a pot, make sure the pot is heavy enough to support it, or place the pot in a second, heavier pot. It can stay in the original pot a couple years before repotting is necessary. If you plant it outdoors, preparation of the site by tilling the soil and amending with 3 to 4 inches of compost and 6-6-6 slow release fertilizer is helpful but not essential. Level and moisten the soil. Multiple bulbs should be planted 12 to 15 inches apart with the neck of the bulb protruding above ground. Keep them moist but not waterlogged until established. If the site needs better drainage, Amaryllises can be planted in a raised bed. Amaryllises are sun and shade tolerant but do best in light shade, where they will look especially spectacular in mass.