

BUCHANAN'S

NATIVE PLANTS

Forcing Bulbs

Paperwhites • Amaryllis • Hyacinth

Paperwhite Narcissus

- Paperwhites need only 2"-3" of root room so shallow containers work well. Glass or ceramic bowls are ideal.
- Plant your paperwhites in soil, pebbles, tumbled beach glass, terra cotta or glass marbles. The planting medium just needs to provide support for the plants and must be suitable for roots to grow through. Because paperwhites are usually discarded or transplanted after flowering, the container's planting medium doesn't need to supply nutrients.
- Plant the bulbs with their wide bottoms down and the top inch of each bulb above the soil/pebble line. Plant paperwhite bulbs close together, for most prolific display.
- If planted in pebbles, chips or marbles, add enough water to come within 3/4" of the top of the pebbles. This will keep the base of the paperwhite bulb moist without soaking the entire bulb.
- Place the pot or bowl in sunny or very bright location. Lots of light will keep stems from growing too tall and becoming floppy. In a week or two, roots will appear, with top sprouts following shortly thereafter. Bud and blooms develop quickly.
- If you live in a frost-free area, after your paperwhites have bloomed you may move them to the garden for future flowering. Simply transplant them to a sunny site. Handle the bulbs gently so the roots remain intact. Water well. Fertilize lightly when transplanted and again beginning in the fall.

Hyacinth

- Hyacinth need 6-7 weeks of cooling prior to planting. After purchase, place bulbs in a well-ventilated bag and place in your refrigerator, away from ripening fruit.
- To force hyacinths on water, set a bulb just above, but not touching the water in a forcing vase or other container. Place bulb in dark cool place for about 8-16 weeks. The temperature during this rooting period is critical. 40° to 50° is ideal. Avoid freezing temperatures.
- When roots fill the glass and there's an inch or two of top-growth, bring it into subdued light and warmer **but still cool**.
- After 7-10 days, move it into bright light, but **keep it as cool as you can** and avoid direct sunlight. Turn it every day to keep it growing upright.
- Change water when it appears murky or treat with activated charcoal.

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Amaryllis

In the garden Amaryllis bloom in March, April, or May, depending on the variety. Some may produce bloom spikes again in the fall. Container-grown amaryllis will bloom indoors six to eight weeks after potting.

- Choose a bulb(s) that's plump and still has some roots at the base.
- Make sure the pot you chose is just large enough for the bulb. Generally a 5 - 7" pot will work fine. The bulb needs to feel crowded to bloom.
- Partially fill the pot with potting mix or decorative stones and place the bulb so that top third of it will be exposed when you fill in potting soil around the sides of the pot.
- Place a bamboo stalk alongside the bulb. The flowers can get top heavy and inserting the stake now will help you avoid damaging the bulb and roots later.
- Water well.
- Place the pot in bright, indirect light and keep the soil moist, but not wet.
- A thick flower stalk should shoot up within a few weeks. The flat leaves will follow as the flower stalk matures.
- Turn the pot every few days, so the flower stalk gets uniform exposure on all sides and grows straight.
- You can feed your Amaryllis with a half strength water soluble fertilizer every 2-3 weeks.
- When the flowers fade, cut the flower stalk back to just above the bulb. Keep watering the plant until it goes dormant in the fall. You can move or plant the Amaryllis outdoors for the summer, in partial shade.

