



February Plant Tip of the Month Amaryllis Care

The large, bell-shaped or lily-like flowers of the Amaryllis make excellent pot plants. When used as individual specimens, amaryllis provides spectacular flower effects. They have a wide range of flower colors from red, pink and white to combinations of these. Their large, robust flowers are very appealing, and the bulb may produce flowers for many years. Some varieties may produce up to six flowers on a single stalk.

When Grown in Containers

Late October is thought to be an ideal time to pot an Amaryllis. Make certain bulb and soil are dry before repotting. Use a small pot in relation to the bulb size. A pot is generally considered large enough if there is room for an inch of soil between the inside edge of the pot and the bulb. Place two or three pieces of broken clay flower pot or 1/2 inch of gravel in the bottom. Amaryllis like to be slightly root bound. When potting, add enough soil so that a good portion of the bulb neck is above the soil surface. A thorough watering is needed immediately after potting. Keep the bulb slightly moist until flowering. When flowering starts, increase the frequency of watering to extend the flowering period. Exposure and Temperature: Southern exposure provides ideal conditions for sun-loving Amaryllis. An eastern or western exposure is second best, while plants grown in a northern exposure may need additional light. Amaryllis prefers a warm temperature (70 degrees to 75 degrees F) for best growth. However, once the plant flowers, cooler temperatures (65 degrees F) will extend the length of bloom. You can expect plants to bloom six to eight weeks after planting. Fertilization: Fertilization determines the size and quality of the flowers and foliage. Any soluble or liquid fertilizer is satisfactory for pot plants, but use it at half the recommended rate. Apply liquid fertilizers at five to six-week intervals. Make the first fertilizer application as new growth begins, then repeat the application when the flower stem is six to eight inches tall. Apply a third application immediately after flowering when the old flower heads and flower stems have been removed.

After flower care

As soon as each flower passes its peak beauty and begins to fade, remove it by cutting the flower stalk two inches from the base. Don't disturb the foliage because it produces the food for next year's flowers. For flowering next year, stop watering and feeding the plant by October 1. When the foliage wilts and droops, cut it off. Then place the pot in a warm dry place until January. Do not water or fertilize during this rest period. Then move the pot to a southern window, begin watering and fertilizing, and the flowering cycle will start again.