

# Amaryllis

## Lily-like garden eye-catchers

Large, lily-like flowers on one- to two-foot stalks make the amaryllis (*Hippeastrum* hybrid) a real eye-catcher.

Michigan State University horticulturists point out that this large, tropical bulb is not your typical, one-time potted florist's plant—it can be reflowered several times.

Average home temperatures, with a night minimum of 50-55 degrees Fahrenheit, suit the amaryllis just fine. Bright light or full sun is ideal.

Pot the bulb in a container two inches bigger than the diameter of the bulb. MSU experts advise.

Good drainage is necessary to prevent bulb rot, so it's a good idea to pot in a container with a drainage hole in the bottom. Use a commercial houseplant potting soil or make your own from equal parts soil, sand and peat. Cover one-half to two-thirds of the bulb with soil.

The first sign of growth is the

appearance of the flower stalk. It will grow rapidly, forming one or more flower buds. Leaves appear after the plant has begun to bloom. Keep the soil evenly moist but not soaking wet throughout the growing period.

Remove blossoms as they fade. Continue to water regularly through the spring and summer, and fertilize monthly to build up the bulb for next year's blooms. At the end of the summer, when the leaves turn yellow and dry, gradually reduce watering and let the soil dry out thoroughly. The bulb will stay dormant through the fall and early winter. To rebloom it, resume watering and fertilizing. The bulb will begin to grow within two weeks and will bloom again in four to six weeks.

Propagate by removing the small bulbs that form on the sides of the parent bulb.

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