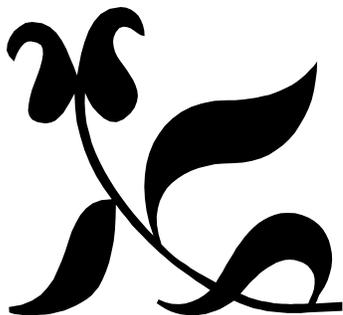


Natureworks  
518 Forest Road  
Northford CT 06472

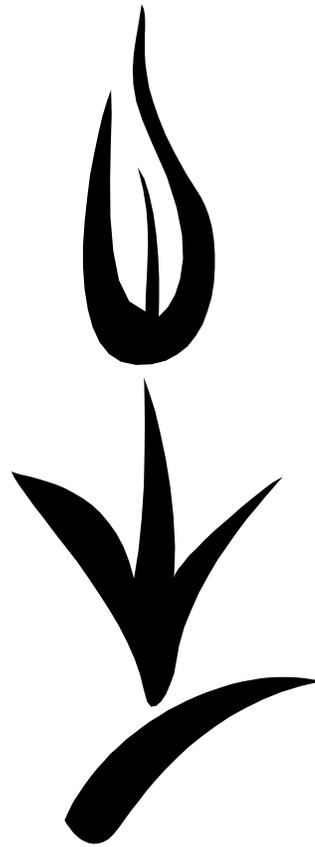
203.484.2748  
nature@iconn.net  
www.naturework.com

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# Amaryllis Care



Pot the bulb into a container only a few inches larger in diameter than the bulb itself. A heavy pot is best because the flower stalks are heavy and the weight of the pot will keep the plant from tipping over. Fill the pot about half full with soil, set the bulb on top of the mix and then fill in around the bulb with more soil. Adjust the position of the bulb so the top third is exposed.

Amaryllis bulbs need warmth in order to root. Bottom heat is best for the first 2-3 weeks when they are in the initial stages of growth. At first, because they will have few, if any roots, water them once and then leave them alone until the soil is almost completely dry. Once they start to grow, they will need watering more often, and once the roots fill the pot (by then, they will be actively growing a flower spike), they could need watering every day or so. Once the flower stalk begins to emerge, the bottom heat isn't necessary. Temperatures between 50-70 degrees are best, with full sun. Low light will cause the flower stalk to stretch and be thin and weak.

Most Amaryllis take 8-12 weeks to bloom from the time that they are first potted up. If you are trying to grow your Amaryllis

plant for Christmas flowering, look for the new "African" Amaryllis, a strain that blooms in 6-8 weeks. These are usually a slightly smaller grade bulb, but you can see the flower buds emerging when you buy them. They grow FAST and can be forced easily.

After all flowering is finished, your bulb is exhausted. If you want it to flower the next year, you must allow it to rebuild itself. Cut off the dead flower stalks, but leave the foliage intact. The leaves produce food which is stored in the bulb for next season's flowers, so you want to encourage their growth. Put your plant in a sunny window, water when the top inch of the soil is dry to the touch and feed with a balanced, water-soluble fertilizer once a month until spring. When all danger of frost is passed, put the plants outside to summer in partial shade in the garden. In late summer, chop off their heads (by then the foliage is pretty sorrowful looking anyway) and bring them back into a dark, cool spot in the cellar for a 6-8 week period of rest. When that is done, top dress them with some fresh, rich potting soil (or repot them to a slightly larger pot) and bring them up into the light. The cycle then begins again.