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Amaryllis

The large bell-shaped or lily-like flowers of the amaryllis make excellent potted plants. A 26-30 cm. circumference Amaryllis bulb will usually produce 1-2 flower stems with 3-4 flowers per stem. A 34 cm. and up circumference Amaryllis bulb will usually produce 2-3 flower stems.

POTTING:

Plant the bulb in a container that is one to two inches larger in diameter than the base of the bulb. Potted bulbs thrive under conditions when they are slightly root-bound. Containers can be either clay or plastic, and must have drainage in the bottom. Plant the bulb with about one-third to one-half of the bulb above the growing surface. This keeps the bulbs nose dry, which helps reduce red blotch infection and fungal disease.

Plant in well drained, sterilized medium. A mixture of equal peat and perlite are excellent. They can be potted or repotted anytime after the plants have gone through a dormant or rest period which is in fall or winter. Late November is an ideal time to plant.

LIGHT AND TEMPERATURE:

The sun-loving amaryllis grows best indoors in a well-lit area that receives at least four hours of direct sunlight a day. They prefer warm temperatures (70 to 75 F) for best growth until the leaves and flower stalks starts to grow. Once the plant flowers, cooler temperatures (65 F) will prolong the life of the bulb.

WATERING:

Immediately after planting, thoroughly water the bulb. Keep the bulb in slightly moist soil condition until flowering. When flowering starts, increase the frequency of watering. Usually once a week is adequate.

FERTILIZING:

Fertilizing an amaryllis bulb that has no leaves can kill the roots, but after the plant begins to grow fertilization is essential. Twice a month, use a water soluble fertilizer recommended for potted plants such as Ferti-lome's Gardner's Special.

CARE AFTER FLOWERING:

Amaryllis can be kept alive and brought to blossom the following year. But this takes some skill and work. It may just be easier to purchase a new bulb the next year. If you want to try, follow these directions. After the flowers have faded, keep watering the plant and start a feeding program with a liquid fertilizer. Amaryllis are big eaters and they must grow many leaves during the summer. This helps them restore strength to produce new flowers the following year. As soon as the danger of frost is past, you can plant your Amaryllis, pot and all, in a sunny location in the garden. Continue the fertilizing program and let leaf growth develop freely. Around September the leaves begin to yellow, which indicates that the Amaryllis needs a rest. Cut the leaves back to the neck of the bulb. Store the bulb with pot and all at a temperature of about 55 F. Store until December or January, or until the bulbs show signs of new growth, then it is time to start the bulb on a new round.