

Amaryllis: Post-Bloom Care

When each bloom withers, cut the flower off just in back of the bloom, removing the green “lump” in back of the blossom and the thin stem connecting the bloom to the main flower stem. This is done so that the plant does not waste energy forming seeds behind each bloom. It is not worth trying to propagate amaryllis from seed as it would be a multi-year project until you produced a bulb capable of flowering.

When all the blooms on the top of the main stem are spent and removed, cut the main stem off 2 inches above the bulb. You will note that the main stem is hollow. The stem is rigid because of the water in its tissues. Put the plant back into normal light, water as necessary. If the plant did not have many leaves at the time of bloom, it may produce many leaves now. Keep the leaves UNCHANGED. Leaf growth and sunlight will send nutrients down to the bulb. Treat the amaryllis as a treasured household plant during the Spring.

In June the amaryllis can be put outdoors for the summer. You can plant the pot and all-this protects the bulb from chewing or tunneling insects. Also, amaryllis prefer being pot bound and do not like being transplanted from pot to garden for the summer.

Water and fertilize the area as with any plant. Amaryllis can stand a sunny location; if in a shady spot, they cannot get energy to recharge” themselves. Leaf growth may continue; nutrients are going from the leaves to feed the bulb. The pot may also stand on a porch, patio or on the ground. Ensure the pot will drain water and not let it collect to rot the bulb.

Entering Dormant Period

As summer ends, you may notice the leaves yellowing or withering. Bring the plant indoors **before** the first frost. Cut off the dead leaves at the top of the bulb’s neck. Let any live leaves remain. Keep the bulb in its pot. If it had been removed from the pot to be placed outdoors, re-pot it immediately after removing from ground—do not allow roots to dry out. At this point the bulb has an extensive root system unlike a newly-purchased bulb.

For the bulb to flower again, we must simulate its life cycle and force it to go dormant. Put the potted amaryllis in a cool (55 degrees F), dimly-lit place such as a cellar for 6-8 weeks. You should not water the bulb. As the leaves yellow and wither, cut them off at the top of the bulb’s neck.

Forcing After Dormancy

End the dormant period when you are ready to start the blooming period once more. Start the force process 6-8 weeks before you want blooming. Cut any dead tissue off the bulb’s neck. Remove the top 1/2 inch of soil from the pot, replace with new soil. Do not remove the bulb from the pot. Water the potted bulb ONCE thoroughly and place the pot in normal indoor temperature.

