

INSPIRING AMARYLLIS ARRANGEMENTS

How to use Amaryllis as Cut Flowers



Amaryllis cut flowers

New Popularity as Cut Flowers

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In the floral trade, demand for Amaryllis as cut flowers is increasing. Commercial growers have been quick to jump on the opportunity, and this has stimulated a flurry of new hybridizing. Those of us who love growing amaryllis can now choose from an extraordinary range of exciting flower styles and colors.

If you visit a high-end floral shop during the winter months, you're likely to see lots of Amaryllis. Floral designers love using these big-blooming flower bulbs, because the blossoms are bold, elegant, and long-lasting.

Why not jump on this trend and try using some of your Amaryllis as cut flowers? It can feel intimidating to cut those big stems, but once you do, you'll discover many new ways to enjoy these magnificent winter-blooming bulbs. Read on for some practical tips about using Amaryllis as cut flowers.

Reasons to Grow Amaryllis as Cut Flowers...

1. Amaryllis flowers last just as long (and sometimes longer) in a vase as they do when still attached to the bulb. This is a big reason they are so popular as cut flowers. Cut the stems after the buds plump up, and you can expect to have flowers for 2 weeks or more.
2. When you cut the stems before the flowers open, it helps the bulb conserve energy. This is important if you want to save your amaryllis bulbs from one year to the next. Or, if you live in a warm climate, as we do, and want to continue to grow your amaryllis outdoors, in the garden.
3. Amaryllis have long, elegant stems and enormous flowers. Like peonies, this makes them top-heavy, which can be a problem when the bulbs are grown in pots. Not everyone has a good place

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to display flowers that are more than 2 feet tall. Cutting the stems of your amaryllis means you can display them in almost any vase you choose. Consider adding greens and other flowers to complement the blooms.

Types of Amaryllis for Cutting

All amaryllis are good for cutting, so grow the colors and flower styles that appeal to you. Some varieties naturally have shorter (or longer) stems, bigger (or smaller) flowers and earlier (or later) bloom times. The more bulbs you plant, the more options you'll have for creating arrangements to enjoy in your own home and to share with friends. Just three large bulbs will give you 6 to 9 stems and between 24 and 40 blossoms!



This is an efficient way to grow amaryllis for cut flowers. Planting six bulbs in a window box will give you dozens of stems.

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Plan for Different Blooms Times

Most Amaryllis bulbs come from either Holland or Israel. In recent years, South Africa and South America (Peru) have also begun producing bulbs for export. With Amaryllis now coming from two hemispheres, growers are able to deliver a continuous supply of cut flowers, almost year-round.

If you want to have Amaryllis flowers for holiday bouquets, plant bulbs from the Southern Hemisphere. They arrive eager to bloom, and if planted by early November, they usually flower for the holidays.

Bulbs from the Northern Hemisphere typically bloom between January and March. The sooner you plant them, the quicker they'll bloom. Note that each variety is on a slightly different schedule. To get a succession of flowers, plant a number of different varieties and don't plant all the bulbs at the same time.

How to Cut Amaryllis Flowers

Amaryllis make stunning cut flowers. However, once removed from the plant, they require care to look their best in a vase.

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These plump, soft buds are at the perfect stage for cutting.

For the longest vase life, cut the stems before the flowers open. Wait until the first buds have puffed out and are soft (as shown above).

Use a sharp knife to cut the stem just an inch or so above the bulb. Amaryllis stems are hollow, so take care to support the stem as you are making the cut. Use a sharp knife to cut the stem at a 45-degree angle. Immediately turn the flower upside down and pour fresh water into the stem (the hollow stems must stay full of water). Plug the cut opening with a cotton ball, and transfer the amaryllis to the vase. Repeat these steps two or three times per week and remove spent blooms as new ones open.

Put the flowers into a tall, squeaky-clean vase of room temperature water, and then move the vase to a cool place for a few hours or overnight. Once the flowers have rested, you can re-cut the stems to whatever length suits your vase or arrangement.

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To arrange them, add floral food to the water in your vase, following proper dilution rates. (For an alternative to floral food, add 1 tsp sugar, 2 tsp lemon juice and 1 tsp bleach to a quart of lukewarm water.)

With proper care, cut amaryllis flowers last up to two weeks.



Amaryllis 'Sweet Nymph'

Change the water in the vase twice a week. Always take a few extra moments to wash the vase and remove bacteria that can clog the stems. Then add water and fresh preservative. Re-cutting the stem each time you change the water will maximize vase life.

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Over time, the bottom of the amaryllis stem will tend to split and curl. If you don't like this look, you can wrap floral tape around the bottom of the stem so the tape adheres to itself. Or use a rubber band. Give the stem a fresh cut right below the tape or rubber band.

As with all cut flowers, amaryllis last longer when you keep the flowers cool and out of the sun. At night, consider moving them into an even cooler area— just make sure there's no danger they'll freeze.

When the flowers begin to fade, use scissors to nip off individual blooms and give other blossoms a chance to enjoy their own moment in the spotlight.

Amaryllis bulbs are available for shipping from mid-October through mid-December. Next time you order, add a few extra bulbs and enjoy the fun of growing and arranging your own mid-winter bouquets!

Design Inspirations

Here are some photographs of floral arrangements to help get you inspired ! Give your own spin on things...



Red-white Amaryllis,
Paperwhites, Poinsettia &
Ranunculus



Red Amaryllis, Amaryllis
'Clown' and red berries



Peach Amaryllis Arrangement

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Amaryllis 'Evergreen', 'Magic Green' & 'Sweet Nymph'



Peach Amaryllis with fruit



Peach Amaryllis & white Phalaenopsis with peach throat



Red Amaryllis with berries and Christmas greens



Amaryllis, Parrot tulips, Roses, Magnolia & Eucalyptus



Amaryllis, roses and Anthuriums



Peach colored Poinsettias, PaperWhites, & Amaryllis



Peach Amaryllis, Hyacinths and Roses



Red roses, white amaryllis, red ilex berry, tulips

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Share your favorite arrangement with your fellow Avid Gardeners and submit them to TAG ! Have Fun !

Happy Holidays!

Jacqueline