



Growing Guru

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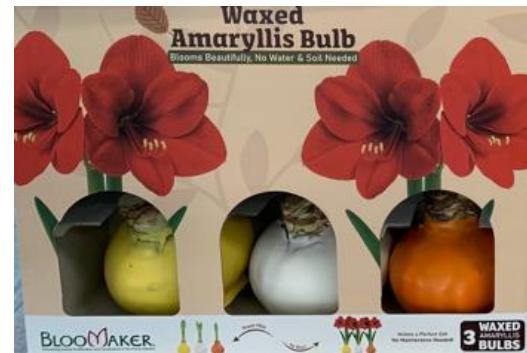


AMARYLLIS YEAR AFTER YEAR

Many people associate amaryllis bulbs and flowers with the winter holidays, but I mostly have blooms around the 4th of July. This is because I have saved a large number of amaryllis bulbs, which I grow in large barrels over summer after they bloom in pots, bring them indoors before the first frost, keep in buckets (sometimes in sawdust) in my basement for several months, and then repot them when they begin to send up new flower shoots, often in early June. However, if I gave the bulbs their required dormant period earlier, starting in September/October, and then put bulbs in pots and gave them bright light and water 4-6 weeks before the holidays, I would have blooms again earlier. [Tips for Growing Amaryllis](#)



Amaryllis flowers are available in many shades of red and pink, and sometimes white. What are typically called "amaryllis" are actually South American plants in the genus *Hippeastrum*. Those in genus *Amaryllis* are bulbs from South Africa that are more often cultivated in gardens. Amaryllis looks easier to pronounce!



Waxed amaryllis bulbs have only become available in the US since about 2015 after Dutch growers developed the convenient way to provide flowers with no soil or watering. Large bulbs protected by wax have enough water and energy stored to produce the flower stalk. After blooming and removing the flower stalk and wax, the bulbs must grow new roots, which were cut off before being waxed. Planted in soil with sufficient time to photosynthesize by new leaves, the bulbs should bloom again.



Emerging flower bud and leaf.



Bulbs increase in size by photosynthesis, so good leaf growth in summer is crucial. Barrels hold moisture better than individual pots.



Unlike cannas & dahlias, amaryllis must be brought in before frost. Some bulbs may have produced "babies." Only when they reach a large size will those bloom, so planting outside multiple summers may be necessary.