



## CHICAGO BOTANIC GARDEN

### **Planting Amaryllis**

#### **Description:**

In this activity, participants learn about the beautiful amaryllis flower and how to grow plants from bulbs. The amaryllis bulb is potted and grown to flowering over the course of approximately six to eight weeks.

#### **Purpose:**

Stimulate the sense of touch and sight. Provide an opportunity for creative expression.

Produce a beautiful gift.

**Time needed:** 55 minutes

#### **Materials:**

2 gallons soilless potting mix

8 flats without holes

15 amaryllis bulbs

15 6-inch plastic pots

15 plastic saucers

15 plant labels

15 cups of small stones

Paper towels



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### **Procedure:**

1. Place dry soilless potting mix on trays and add warm water with spray bulb. Mix with hands until potting mix is thoroughly moistened but not soaking. The mix should become dark brown and hold together when squeezed.
2. Give each participant one plastic pot and bulb. Talk about the amaryllis bulb, point out the roots and discuss how the bulb will first send out roots and then a stem will appear followed in many weeks by a bud that will open to the flower they have selected.
3. Demonstrate how to tear one paper towel to fit the bottom of each pot. Place the paper towel over the drainage holes in the bottom of the pot. This allows the water to drain and the soil to stay inside the pot.
4. Fill the bottom of the pot with  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch of small stones.
5. Next, fill pot approximately  $\frac{2}{3}$  full with potting mix and set the bulb in the center of the pot, so that about  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the bulb is sticking up above the soil.
6. Add additional potting mix around the bulb to set it in place. Tap the mix down a bit with the fingers. This will support the bulb to stand upright. Fill pot to  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch from the pot's rim.
7. Water the bulb well with lukewarm water. Warm water clings to soil particles, increasing the percolation of water into the pot.
8. Write each participant's name, date, and plant name on the labels. Insert the label near pot edge.



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9. Place the plant in a cool, dark location for ten days until the top of the bulb begins to break and a shoot emerges. Then move to an area with more light. Water sparingly. After growth begins, keep the soil evenly moist.
10. As the flower bud begins to show color, move the pot to a cooler location to prolong the bloom period.
11. When the bloom fades, cut the stem about 3 inches above the bulb. Leaves will appear and these are what will feed the bulb for next year's flowers. When the leaves appear, feed the bulb with a mild fertilizer every three weeks for several months. Stop watering the bulb in May and let the soil dry out completely. Place the bulb in the pot laid on its side in a dark place for three months. After this time of rest, repeat the initial process of moistening the soil and placing the pot in a cool, dark location for ten days.