

Hippeastrum x hybridum Amaryllis¹

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Introduction

The large, bold flowers of amaryllis are well known as potted plants, the tall flower scape projecting well above the long, evergreen, strap-like leaves (Fig. 1). Borne in clusters of two to five, the trumpet-shaped blooms appear in spring when planted in the landscape and are available in various shades and combinations of white, pink, red, or orange. Amaryllis are semi-evergreen when grown in northern Florida since the foliage lays down and rots during the winter. They can be used in a mass planting spaced about 12 inches apart or scattered among small shrubs or ground-covers for a splash of delightful spring color.



Figure 1. Amaryllis.

General Information

Scientific name: *Hippeastrum x hybridum*

Pronunciation: hip-ee-ASS-strum HYE-brid-um

Common name(s): amaryllis

Family: *Amaryllidaceae*

Plant type: bulb/tuber; perennial; herbaceous

USDA hardiness zones: 8 through 10 (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 8: year round

Planting month for zone 9: year round

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: mass planting; container or above-ground planter; border; naturalizing; edging

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant



Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range

Description

Height: 1 to 2 feet

Spread: 1 to 2 feet

Plant habit: upright

Plant density: open

Growth rate: slow

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Texture: coarse

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: most emerge from the soil, usually without a stem

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: linear

Leaf venation: parallel

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Leaf blade length: 18 to 36 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: orange; pink; red; white

Flower characteristic: spring flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: round

Fruit length: .5 to 1 inch

Fruit cover: fleshy

Fruit color: green

Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: not applicable

Current year stem/twig color: not applicable

Current year stem/twig thickness: not applicable

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun

Soil tolerances: clay; sand; acidic; loam

Drought tolerance: moderate

Soil salt tolerances: poor

Plant spacing: 6 to 12 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding plant: plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

Amaryllis will grow in any well-drained soil, preferably in high, shifting shade. They grow well under the shade of trees provided they receive some direct light for a portion of the day. They flower poorly in total shade. The foliage will discolor when plants are grown in full sun, although they will flower better. They flower poorly in shade. While the normally tough leaves will be damaged by frost in zones 8, 9, and 10, they are quickly replaced in spring. The large bulbs are normally left in the ground but some growers prefer to lift and separate new off shoot bulblets from the bulbs each fall, replanting at biweekly intervals from November to February to provide a succession of spring bloom. Bulbs should be planted only deep enough to cover the top of the bulbs. Plants should be fertilized lightly throughout the flowering period.

The vast number of available hybrids are too numerous to list. They have been selected for flower color, number and size, sturdiness of flower stalk (scape), and plant size.

Propagation of amaryllis is by seed or division. Plants will grow quickly and easily from seed, requiring three to several years before flowering.

Pests and Diseases

Relatively pest-free, amaryllis is occasionally bothered by caterpillars and other chewing insects, neither requiring control in most instances. Soil nematodes can also slow growth.

Red blotch virus mosaic and botrytis are problem diseases.