

Forcing Hyacinth and Paperwhite Bulbs

Hyacinth

A great bulb to force for flowers and fragrance.

Pot the hyacinth bulb in soil in a container at least 4" deep and store in a cool, dark area like a refrigerator or place outside in the garden under straw for 8-12 weeks. Water as needed. When shoots have emerged, move potted hyacinths to a bright location indoors, to start forcing them to flower. Once flower buds appear, place pot in a cool (50-65 degree) location with bright, indirect sunlight. Total time from root to bloom is 9-13 weeks.

Paperwhites

One of the easiest bulbs to force.

Paperwhites do not need preparation and are ready to grow anytime. You can force the bulbs in either soil or water.

If you choose to use water, a rock or marble bed is a good option to support the root structure of the bulb. The marbles or rocks will anchor the bulb at the base so it will grow upright in a tall clear vase. Fill the vase with water just above the rock/marble line. Paperwhites have a floppy habit, so the vase is a great option. If you choose to grow in a pot of soil, the bulbs should be planted just under the soil.

Keep in a cool location with little or no light for about two weeks. A cool location will result in a more compact plant with longer lasting blooms. When bulbs have firmly rooted, move to a location with bright, indirect light. Total time from root to bloom is 3-5 weeks.

Almost all bulbs can be forced indoors by planting the bulb two times as deep as the bulb size and chilling the pot. Choose shorter varieties of bulbs for best performance. The cooler you keep all your forcing bulbs, the longer they will last.