

Indoor Blooms planting hardy bulbs in containers

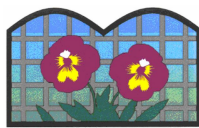
Choose a pot of the desired size for planting your bulbs. Although most sizes will work, a 6- to 8-inch pot will give your bulbs enough growing room. If the pot has no drainage hole, place a one-inch drainage layer in the bottom of the pot. Use gravel, stones or perlite.

Add sufficient potting mix so the tips of the bulbs will be even with the top of the pot. Arrange the bulbs on top with the pointed ends facing up and the flat side of the bulb facing the outside of the pot. This allows the first leaf to grow out away from the pot making the finished container more attractive.

Cover the bulbs with more potting mix to within 1/4" of the pot lip. The tips of the bulbs should be visible. Water the bulbs and move the container to a cool area such as a shed or unheated garage, or the refrigerator. The bulbs require 13 weeks at 35-48 degrees Fahrenheit. Water as needed. In a few months, you'll begin to see signs of growth. At this point, bring the container indoors and water regularly. Place in bright light until flowers show color (3-4 weeks). Once color is visible, move to bright indirect light. Soon you'll be rewarded with beautiful blooms.

Note: Cooling for more than 13-14 weeks produces taller flowers, cooling for less than 13 weeks produces shorter flowers. It also makes forcing more difficult because the bulbs aren't sufficiently rooted. Allow 16-18 weeks from planting to flowering.

Hyacinths: To force in a forcing jar, set the bulb in the jar and add water just to the base of the bulb. Follow the cooling and growing procedure above. Check every few days to be sure the water reaches just to the base of the bulb.



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