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Photo courtesy of the Netherlands Flower Bulb Information Center

*Hippeastrum 'Picotee'*  
Amaryllis, Barbados lily

**BOTANICAL NAME**

*Hippeastrum* spp. (hip-ee-AS-trum)

**COMMON NAMES**

Amaryllis, Barbados lily

**DESCRIPTION**

These tropical bulb plants produce showy trumpet-shaped blooms that range from 3 to 8 inches in diameter. There are generally three to six blooms atop of each stem (bulbs can produce one to three flower stalks, depending on the size and quality of the bulbs). Blooms can be single flowered, with 6 "petals"; double flowered, with 12; or triple flowered, with 18. Some new hybrids have narrower petals, giving the blooms a spidery/lilylike appearance.

Stems are hollow, smooth, light green and range from about 16 to 30 inches in height. The leaves, which, like the stems, emerge from the bulbs, are long, straplike and dark green.

**COLORS**

These bulb flowers are available in both

solid colors and bicolors (usually striped or mottled), in a palette that comprises reds, ranging from pink to burgundy; red-orange; orange; salmon; and white, as well as new yellow and yellow-green varieties.

**DECORATIVE LIFE**

Potted amaryllises can last from 10 to 24 days, depending on the variety and care. Individual blooms typically last two to five days each.

**AVAILABILITY**

These plants are typically available in winter and spring months, but that varies by region and from grower to grower. They are generally always obtainable in November and December, but some growers produce these plants from as early as October through as late as April or May. Check with your favorite supplier(s) for availability.

**in-store and consumer care**

**LIGHT** Potted amaryllises require as much bright indirect light as possible during their active growing period, but they must be protected from direct sunlight. Too little light can cause stems to weaken. Rotate the pot occasionally to prevent the stalk(s) from growing toward the light.

**WATER** During these plants' growth and flowering periods, keep the soil consistently moist. Take care not to wet the bulb when watering.

**TEMPERATURE** Amaryllises prefer cool temperatures (55 F to 70 F) during their growth and flowering stages.

**FERTILIZER** Feed potted amaryllises with a balanced all-purpose fertilizer every 10 days during their growth and flowering periods, or apply a controlled-release fertilizer at the beginning of the growth period.

**GROWING MEDIA** The ideal potting medium is a high-quality, well-draining soil. A mixture of peat moss, sand and potting soil also can be used.

Amaryllises can be grown hydroponically (in water) by placing the bulb atop the rim of a water-filled container, allowing only the base of the bulb and/or the roots to be in contact with the water.

**GROOMING** Remove pollen-bearing anthers as blooms open, and remove blooms as they fade.

**REBLOOMING** After the flowers fade, cut off the stalks level with the top of the bulb, and continue to feed and water the plant every two weeks. Allow the leaves to dry gradually, then cut them off, and place the potted bulb in a cool (50 F), dark space for 10 to 15 weeks.

Six to eight weeks before you want it to rebloom, repot the bulb into fresh soil, in a pot that leaves 2 inches on all sides between the bulb and the pot's edge. Place the bulb high in the pot so that the top one-third to one-half of the bulb is above the soil. Water well, and place the planted bulb in a cool (60 F), low-light space for about four weeks or until new growth reaches about 6 inches. Then move the plant to a warmer, brighter environment; water consistently; and fertilize every 10 days.

**challenges**

**ETHYLENE SENSITIVITY** Amaryllises are extremely sensitive to ethylene gas. Make sure those you purchase are treated with an ethylene inhibitor at the grower level or during shipping. In addition, keep them

**fun facts**

(See "Cut Flower of the Month" on Page 18.)

away from sources of ethylene such as ripening fruit, decaying flowers and foliage, automobile exhaust, and tobacco smoke because the gas will hasten development and decrease their lives, as well as cause crepey and wilting blooms.

**DISEASES** A common fungal disease is *Stagonospora*, which is sometimes referred to as red blotch, red leaf spot or red fire. It shows as bright-red patches on any part of the plant, from roots to flowers. It is most active in cool, damp weather. Another concern can be amaryllis rust, a virus that affect the bulbs.

**PESTS** Common pests include mites, thrips and mealybugs.

**TOXICITY** All parts of these plants can cause minor illness, if ingested, so keep them out of the reach of children and pets. **sr**

Some information provided by:  
 Botanica, by R.G. Turner Jr. and Ernie Wasson  
 Chain of Life Network®, [www.chainoflife.org](http://www.chainoflife.org)  
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