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Tired of buying the same holiday housewarming gifts each year? Why not try giving and growing amaryllis bulbs this winter! These winter-time beauties are easy to grow, take care of, and enjoy with their beautiful, colorful blossoms that cheer up the home during winter.

First, pick a large, firm, healthy amaryllis bulb. Next, choose a container that is only 1 to 2 inches wider around than the bulb. Choose a potting mix that is light and drains water well.

Place the bulb in the container with the bulb covered half-way with the potting mix. Water the bulb thoroughly until the water runs out of the container. Do not water the bulb again until the bulb's roots are well developed to avoid root rot.

Place the bulb and container in a well lit, cool place in the house, around 50 to 60 degrees Fahrenheit.

Longevity is one of the greatest features about growing amaryllis. After they have finished blooming, the attractive foliage can be enjoyed in the home during the growing season.

Place the amaryllis in a bright location in the home. Once the threat of frost has passed, the amaryllis, container and all, can also be planted in the ground in a bright location for the summer.

Consider growing amaryllis bulbs

As the foliage starts to turn yellow in the home or outside, start to cut back on watering the bulb. Once the foliage has died, allow the potting media to dry out completely. Carefully trim the dead foliage back with a clean scissors or knife.

Store the amaryllis and its container on its side, in a cool place, preferably 40 to 45 degrees Fahrenheit, for two to three months. Do not water the bulb during this dormant period.

Once the dormant period has passed, bring the bulb container out of the cool storage to a warm location. Resume watering to initiate new growth. New flower buds should appear in several weeks. Bulbs with four or more strong leaves will probably bloom.

Bulbs with fewer or weaker foliage may not flower once brought out of dormancy. If taken care of correctly during another growing and dormant period, non-blooming bulbs can bloom in future years.

If you have any questions about growing amaryllis bulbs, please contact me at dlott2@unl.edu, by calling (308) 532-2683, or by contact your local University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension Office. Have a great week!