



## GROWING TIPS FOR PAPERWHITE NARCISSUS

"Paperwhite" Narcissus is one of the easiest flower bulbs for homeowners to force. Paperwhites originate in Mediterranean countries and are tender bulbs. Thus, they can be grown outside only in climates which do not go below 25 degrees in the winter.. Unless one lives in this type of climate, forced bulbs should be discarded. Paperwhite bulbs are available for purchase in the fall, having been harvested from their growing areas a few months earlier. They are ready to bloom, and do not need to be chilled as do our common daffodils in order to force them into bloom in pots indoors.

Potted into a well-drained soil or even gravel, they don't need any fertilizer. Place the bulbs pointed side up in a shallow pot or bowl filled two thirds full with gravel, sand, marbles, polished stones, or soil mix. A greater show will result if several bulbs are put in each container close together but not touching. Fill in around the bulbs so they are covered to one-half their height, and water enough to keep stones or other media moist. Put the dish in a cool (about 50 to 55F), dark room for about a week to encourage roots to develop. When green shoots appear, move the bulbs into a filtered sunlight location.



Keep the temperatures cool (about 60F) during forcing. In about three more weeks, fragrant clusters of white, cream, or yellow flowers will appear. As long as the soil is evenly moist and the light is bright, they are reliable to the point of being fool proof. Flower development is closely tied to the temperatures at which they are grown. Day temperatures in the 70's F. and evenings in the low 60's F. are ideal. Cooler temperatures really inhibit growth and warmer temperatures shorten the life of the blooms. How long the bulbs are stored before planting can be significant too. For example, bulbs planted in October will take over a month to bloom, but bulbs will bloom in 2 weeks if planted in February. The longer you store them, the faster they will eventually develop.

While the plants could be grown on so they could re-bloom the next year, this is difficult to accomplish. Most people just add the spent plants to their compost pile, and start anew with fresh bulbs.

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Al Krismer Plant Farm  
3556 Poole Rd.  
Cincinnati Ohio 45251  
[www.krismers.com](http://www.krismers.com)

