

## **Forcing Bulbs**

Indoor forcing is the process that stimulates bulbs to bloom out of season. Hyacinths, Daffodils, Tulips and Crocuses are perfect for indoor forcing. Of all the flower bulbs available in autumn, Hyacinths, Paperwhites, Narcissi (Daffodils) and Amaryllis are the easiest to bring into flower.

### **Here are Step-by-Step Directions for Forcing Bulbs**

- 1) Place a layer of hard medium (such as pebbles or clay chips) on the bottom of the container to provide drainage. Fill the container almost to the top with potting soil, and then plant the bulbs on top of this, close together.
- 2) Add the rest of the soil to partially cover the bulbs. Thoroughly soak the entire pot with water. Place the container in a cool place (below 50 degrees) for a period of 12 weeks. During this period, keep the soil moist; (Paperwhites and Amaryllis do not require cold temperature treatment).
- 3) A cool cellar, unheated garage, or refrigerator is a perfect environment. After 12 weeks of cool storage, the root system should be well established. With a strong root system and one inch sprouts, our pot is now ready to be moved indoors to a sunny location. The temperature should not exceed 80 degrees. The pale shoots will quickly turn green.
- 4) Water once a day or every other day to keep the soil moist. You have just fooled Mother Nature into producing beautiful, natural blooms in your home!

### **Containers for Indoor Forcing**

Choose containers that reflect your decorating tastes. Metal, ceramic, plastic and clay planters will all do. If new clay pots are used, soak them in water 24 hours prior to use. Forced bulbs require well-drained soil; therefore, containers must have a drainage hole, and must be at least twice as deep as the bulb for roots to develop. Light soil is the key, especially for drainage. Potting soil is the easiest or you can combine equal parts of weed-free garden soil, peat and sand. Don't worry about fertilizer — the bulb contains all its own food.