

How do I force Hyacinth bulbs to bloom?



Hyacinths may be forced in special forcing vases, or any watertight container with stones, pebbles, or glass beads.

Set the bulb just above, but not touching the water. Make sure to change the water on occasion to keep it fresh.

Alternatively, they may be potted in small pots with potting mix, with a minimum pot size of 4" for one bulb, or 6" for three.

Place the bulb in a dark cold area below 48° F, but above freezing. It is critical that the bulb remains below 48° but above freezing, with 40° to 48° being ideal. This can be an unheated room, attic, garage, or refrigerator.

If your hyacinth flower spikes are too short or malformed, that means they did not get enough chilling time below 48°. Longer chilling times will give you longer flower stems.



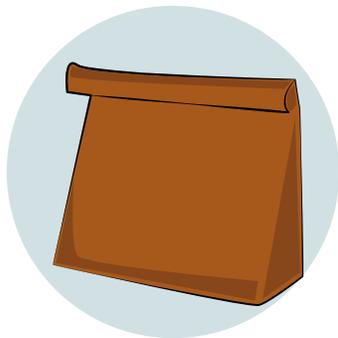
If you place them in the fridge, avoid keeping them near fruit, especially apples, as they produce ethylene gas which can destroy the flower buds.



The bulbs may be taken out of chilling when the glass is filled with roots (or there are roots sticking out of the pot's drainage hole) and there is an inch or two sprouting from the tops. This should take place in 8 to 16 weeks.

When you first remove the hyacinth, place it in indirect light in a cool spot around 60° for 7 to 10 days.

Afterwards, place it into brighter light and give it a quarter turn daily to keep it growing upright. They should bloom within 2 weeks after removing them from chilling.



An easier method of forcing hyacinths is to store the bulbs dry in a paper bag in the refrigerator for 10-13 weeks.

Then place them above water or pot them up just like you would for regular forcing.

Some varieties may respond better than others using this method, with varieties like Gipsy Queen working well.

Bulbs that have been forced generally do not transition well into the garden. It is recommended that you compost the bulbs when they finish lowering. If you do plant them in the garden, do so in a sunny, well-drained location. They will probably take 2 to 3 years to re-bloom.

