

## Paperwhite Narcissus

*Paperwhites are easy to grow indoors, providing clusters of white flowers and perfume in the season when we need it most. Unlike most bulbs that require a period of dark, cool temperatures, Paperwhites will grow and bloom without waiting..... even without soil! Time your planting to create fantastic living gifts for the holidays.*

### **Planting in Water:**

Planting several bulbs in a glass vase that is both tall and wide is the most popular way to grow paperwhites and contain their tall stems.

1. Place a layer of pebbles, marbles or beach rock in the bottom of a vase or other decorative container, and place the bulbs about half-way into the medium.
2. Add water just to the base of the bulbs and check water level often. A little charcoal mixed with the pebbles will help keep the water fresh.
3. Place the container in bright light. *Four to six weeks* is typical timing from planting to white, fragrant blooms.
4. When the stems are tall and blooming they will be nicely supported by the sides of the vase. You can also use a beautiful twiggy branch, bamboo, a small homemade trellis or wire obelisk as a good-looking support for floppy stems.

Adding alcohol to the water stresses the bulbs and reduces the height of plants without affecting flower size.

- When roots have formed and the green shoot is 1"- 2" tall, pour off the water and replace with a solution of 4 -6% alcohol. Example: If you are using 80 proof liquor (40 percent alcohol), that works out to one part liquor to 7 parts water.
- Rubbing alcohol (either 70 or 100% isopropyl alcohol) can be substituted; just remember to dilute it more.
- Keep the beer and wine for yourself; their sugars damage plants.

### **Planting in Soil:**

1. Fill three-quarters of the container with a drain hole with quality organic potting mix. Use enough bulbs to "fill" the container, close but not touching each other.
2. After you arrange the bulbs, place additional soil around them. Bulb tops should just peek through the soil surface. The bulbs should then be watered in well.
3. Place container in bright light. It takes approximately *15-20 days* after planting for the plant to reach its bud stage. *Four to six weeks* is typical timing from planting to white, fragrant blooms.

The cooler the pot is kept, the longer the flowers will last. They can manage outdoor temperatures as low as 35° F. in a protected area, so it's possible to set them outside on balconies, porches, or decks to prolong the bloom.

**AFTER BLOOM:** Forcing is hard on most bulbs. The easiest after-bloom care is pitching the bulbs in the compost pile.