

Green 'N' Growing

Elaine Gordon



This bulb a real sleeping beauty

Huge, trumpet-shaped blooms — three or four spectacularly produced on each long stalk — are just waiting in readiness to emerge from that dormant Amaryllis bulb you may have received as a gift.

It's a sleeping beauty, alright, but one that doesn't need a kiss to wake up!

Instead, the bulb should be potted up in a container just large enough to comfortably hold it before being placed in bright light where the soil is kept barely moist until growth shows. It won't take long. The flower bud usually comes up first, followed by foliage which remains until dormancy starts. Water moderately.

When in full growth, you can loosely tie the spike to a stake to keep it more erect. At this time, apply water so the mixture is evenly moist, but never wet. Keep out of direct sun by in a bright position where the temperature is about 65 degrees F. Flower lifespan is shortened by too much heat. Remove blossoms as they fade.

Feed monthly during and after flowering to increase the bulb's vigor. If you like, put the pot outdoors in summer in a bright, part shade area and continue care. In early fall, bring indoors to a bright position and water and feed on a reduced scale.

Allow the soil to thoroughly dry, remove yellowed and dried leaves and let the bulb rest in its pot in a dark, dry, cool spot indoors for

three months before bringing back to life again.

HELPFUL HINTS

Gift plants are a pleasure to give and a joy to receive. But, if we want to go one step farther and add our own "special touch," imagination provides us with dual role containers for marrying with them.

A velvety flowered Gloxinia or an Azalea decked out in its finery inside a ceramic or antique potty. A festive Poinsettia or exotic Caladium placed in a soup tureen. A Christmas Cactus tucked inside a brass cuspidor, or in a wicker basket hanging from a ceiling-suspended kitchen pot rack.

A miniature African Violet with its tiny pot nestled in a bone china cup and saucer that has a floral pattern complementing the color of the plant's blooms.

Toast of the town

An awards banquet for Markham Toastmasters is being held Tuesday, Dec. 17 at the Parkway Hotel.

Bob Newman, administrative vice-president of the Markham Toastmasters Club, said residents interested in public speaking are welcome to attend.

Tickets are \$13. A cocktail hour will begin at 6:30 p.m.

For tickets or further information on the banquet, call 640-4960.

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