

## How to Force Grape Hyacinths



When it comes to forcing bulbs, coaxing, actually; is the term used to describe the process that stimulates bulbs to bloom out of season, paperwhites and amaryllis are the first and usually the only ones that come to mind, but Grape Hyacinth are easy to force too and their bright blue purple color will cheer up the most dreary winter day.



Grape Hyacinth are about 8 inches tall with small tight clusters of flowers, hence the name, they have a delicate fragrance and bright blue flowers but also come in white or two-tone. They are easy to grow in pots, water or even a paper bag.



For forcing any spring blooming bulb chill time is the most important part. Most bulbs need at least 8 to 10 weeks of chill time, you can purchase pre-chilled bulbs that will be ready to pot up and grow out.



Fill a pot loosely with potting mix and set bulbs side by side (not touching), pointed end up. Cover loosely with soil, leaving the tips of the bulbs exposed.



Water thoroughly and move the container to a cool, dark location (40°F), such as a basement, garage or refrigerator. If you are storing in a refrigerator, be sure to keep the bulbs away from fruits and vegetables as they produce Methane which prevents blooming. Don't set it and forget it however check bulbs around 8 weeks time for shoots when these reach 2 inches tall move pot to gradually to a light source either a sunny window or under lights.



Grape hyacinths also respond well to the paper-bag method of forcing. Simply punch a few small holes in a paper bag, place the bulbs inside and loosely close it. Watch for shoots and then plant the bulbs into a container, or grow them on in a bulb vase or shallow dish with rocks.



Forced bulbs will not flower again so can be discarded once the flowers fade.