



### Garden Tip: Winter months are a good time to force paperwhite blooms

Gardeners can get a head start on growing delicate-looking flower indoors



It may sound a bit aggressive, but forcing paperwhite flowers to bloom during the winter months is actually a gentle nudge to grow roots, shoots and flowering stems indoors. Kansas State University horticulture expert Cynthia Domenghini said paperwhites are easy to force into bloom. In colder climates, paperwhite bulbs can be grown indoors for flowers during the winter months. Then, she said, the delicate-looking flower can be transplanted outdoors when temperatures warm. To force paperwhites indoors, “begin with healthy bulbs from a reputable source,” Domenghini said. “Then, store those bulbs in a cool, dry location until planting.” While still indoors, plant the bulbs in a clear, shallow dish – about three inches deep, without drainage holes, Domenghini said. Add a one-inch layer of washed gravel or decorative stones to the base. “Place the bulbs on top of the rocks and use additional gravel or stones to hold them in place,” Domenghini said. “The tops of the bulbs should remain visible. Fill the container with enough water to keep the base of the bulbs wet.” Domenghini said gardeners should keep the container in a cool, dark location initially to promote root growth. Then, move it to a south-facing window until the bulbs begin to bloom. Keep flowers in a cool location away from direct sunlight to prolong the bloom period. “Paperwhites can be expected to bloom within eight weeks of planting,” she said. Additional tips for forcing paperwhites, according to Domenghini:

- Maintain the water level at the base of the bulbs throughout the growing period.
- Paperwhites can be forced in a moist, soilless mix, as well. Use a container with drainage holes and plant the bulbs so the top third is visible.
- Paperwhite bulbs should be placed within one-inch of each other in the container.

The linear leaves of paperwhites often fall over. They can be propped up with decorative supports, or grown in a taller, glass container to hold them upright.

### Have a Gardening or Lawn Care Question?

We are happy to answer your gardening and landscape questions, stop by the office or give us a call (785-332-3171). You can also find answers and resources for the most common questions at the K-State Horticulture Information Center at: <https://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/horticulture-resource-center/>

To best help with your plant questions please submit multiple pictures for accurate diagnosis to [rmelcher@ksu.edu](mailto:rmelcher@ksu.edu).

For pest or disease diagnosis:

1. One picture of the entire plant or garden area
2. One picture of a branch or affected area
3. One up close, in focus picture of any symptoms of concern (leaf spots, holes, discoloration, etc.)

For plant identification:

1. One picture of the entire plant or garden area
2. One picture of leaves or branches
3. One picture of any flowers, flower buds, or seeds visible