



** This news release from K-State Research and Extension is available online at <https://ksre-learn.com/forcing-paperwhite-blooms>

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

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

[By Pat Melgares](#), K-State Research and Extension news service

MANHATTAN, Kan. — 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.

Domenghini and her colleagues in K-State's Department of Horticulture and Natural Resources produce a [weekly Horticulture Newsletter](#) with tips for maintaining home landscapes and gardens.

Interested persons can subscribe to the newsletter, as well as send their garden and yard-related questions to hortsupport@ksu.edu, or contact your [local K-State Research and Extension office](#).

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FOR PRINT PUBLICATIONS: Links used in this story

K-State Horticulture Newsletter, <https://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/info-center/newsletters/index.html>

K-State Research and Extension local offices, <https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/about/statewide-locations.html>

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