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Grow Hippeastrum In The Greenhouse



By: [LaDell Sumpter](#) | [Email](#)

April 17, 2012

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As a South African and spring bulb grower, I have found that what looks the prettiest in the product catalogs may not be the smartest. During a recent growing period working with *Hippeastrum*, a perennial bulb native to

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South Africa, I have documented a few tips that will help any beginning grower successfully grow and financially manage a large crop.

Cultivating Cultivars

In the trade, there are terms used to describe different bulbs. One of these terms is garden variety. Garden variety cultivars are usually only good for small quantities, as their habits are generally leggier and often inconsistent in maintaining desired traits across a crop.

When working with *Hippeastrum*, it should be noted that there are both small and large bulb cultivars, and the size of the flower is related to the bulb. But beware, bigger is not always better. As a grower, you want to avoid the pitfall of buying too many larger bulb cultivars. These cultivars take a longer time to reach bloom and eat up bench space when rotating multiple crops. Size is also a big factor when it comes to finances. Larger bulbs have a higher grading but are far more expensive to buy in bulk than individually and could easily cripple a greenhouse budget.

Here are some examples of cultivars that display common traits. These traits are perfect for greenhouse growth and a fast production schedule:

- ‘Fanfare’ – Smaller bulb cultivar; maintains an even growth habit and is very fast to bloom, usually within 10 days. Flower crowns consist of six bright-red, showy trumpet flowers
- ‘Miracle’ – Large bulb cultivar; quick to bloom and showy with crown of vibrant trumpet flowers. Scape often reaches a height of 13 inches.
- ‘Inferno’ – Large bulb cultivar; takes around 20 days to bloom but is very balanced when grown in pot and will not topple. Crown consists of double, ember-colored trumpets that are often lustrous in direct sunlight.

Trial and Error



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Testing a product before buying allows one to see how certain cultivars perform in a certain greenhouse. Light, air flow, watering systems and temperature regulation can affect the growth rate and bloom time of each grower's *Hippeastrum*. During personal trialing, many different cultivars of *Hippeastrum* were monitored for overall bloom height, bloom length and habit over the course of a growing period.

The major thing that needed to be monitored was how long it took the bulb to reach maturity from its initial pot date. A short growing period and fast product was studied carefully to ensure that bench space would not be wasted where other things could be pushed through and grown. Most importantly, growers will want to document all the good and bad qualities their trials displayed during the growing period, as well as the overall consistency of the crop. Any imperfections in a trial of 20 will be magnified exponentially in a crop of 100, so it's important to have an allowance cap for error. By keeping these key elements in mind, growers guarantee a selection of the best cultivars in a greenhouse.

Maker's Mark

A crop is also very dependent on the supplier. Researching your suppliers is a key element to ensuring that you are getting the best for your money. Always research a company's margin of error, shipping fees and facilities. Don't be afraid to contact companies directly and request catalogs. This is a great way to see the company's products at their absolute best. Most importantly, it is key that growers research how a company is willing to deal with mistakes. If a company is slow to respond or unwilling to admit mistakes and cover collateral, it can reflect poorly on your end of business, causing damage to the production schedule.

Whether you are taking on *Hippeastrum* or any new crop for large scale production, these insights help avoid many pitfalls. Researching your providers, choosing



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April 17, 2012

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proper cultivars and running trials are ways to maximize the turnover ratio and, ultimately, return more green to your greenhouse.

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One comment on "Grow Hippeastrum In The Greenhouse"



Ann F. Shubin · [June 20, 2012 at 2:03 pm](#)

This info is very helpful to a person like myself. In fact any further info I can get I would really appreciate. I am searching for info on growing hippeastrums in a hothouse from seeds. I would like to know if it is cold do I keep the hothouse heated? Very good info thank you ever so much. Ann

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