



## GLADIOLUS

For a striking flower show and stunning cut flowers, grow gladiolus. This spring planted corm (bulb), quickly produces flower spikes in a variety of colors that pop. This makes them a first choice for 'tucking into' young flower beds that could use some bulking up until they reach maturity. Glads also make excellent cut flowers grouped together in a vase or mixed with other flowers in arrangements.

Open bags as soon as they arrive and if the corms are not planted immediately, store in open trays in a cool dry place. Arrange the corms in a single layer with the base down. Sprouts develop while the corms are stored and the sprouts will grow at angles if the top is not facing up. Plant gladiolus early in the spring, when the soil can be worked after danger of frost has past. Glads should be planted 15-20 cm (6-8 in) deep in full sun if possible. Set the corms into deeply prepared holes or rows, cover the corms with about 4 cm (1.5 in) soil. Gradually add more soil cover as the shoot grows up. Planting area should be well prepared before planting. Glads prefer rich soil with good drainage. Water should be provided by deep soakings of the soil, at least once a week, not light sprinklings. Spray with Malathion or Insecticidal Soap to prevent or control thrips which damage the flowers. Staking may be required to prevent wind damage. Dig the corms about 2 months after flowers are gone or sooner if frost occurs first. Cut off the tops as close to the corm as possible, dry the corms quickly at 26 C (79 F) in a well ventilated area for a week. After the corms have been stored for several weeks, the old corm will snap off easily. Clean away soil and roots. Let corms callous in a warm circulating air. Dust corms with a Insecticide/fungicide and store for the winter in a cool 10 C (50 F) dry place.

### When & Where to Plant Gladiolus

**Light:** Gladiolus grow and flower best in full sun. Gladiolus corms will flower in part shade, but the colors will not be as vivid as when planted in full sun, and the plant won't grow quite as well.

**Soil:** Gladiolus like well-drained, sandy loam soil. The corms will rot if the soil is too heavy and wet. If you have clay soil, grow in raised beds and loosen the soil to 12 inches deep before planting.

**Spacing:** Space gladiolus corms 6 to 10 inches apart in the garden and plant corms 2 to 6 inches deep depending upon the size of the corm (plant bigger corms deeper).

**Planting:** Plant gladiolus corms in spring 2 weeks before your last expected frost date.

**Watering:** Keep gladiolus plants well watered with at least 1 inch of water a week. This amount may have to increase during periods of drought or if you're growing in raised beds.

**Fertilizing:** Add compost to the soil before planting gladiolus. Add an organic, water-soluble fertilizer when the plants are 10 inches tall, and again when the flowers start to show color.

**Trimming & Pruning:** Gladiolus are either grown as a cut flower for indoor arrangements, or as an annual flower in the garden. They don't require trimming or pruning.

The flower stalk is harvested in the morning for flower arrangements when the lower 3 blossoms on the stalks begin to open. Leave at least 4 leaves on the plant to rejuvenate the corms if you plan on saving them for next year.

In the garden, deadhead the flower stalk after the flowers fade. This will also prevent the flowers from setting seed and self sowing throughout your beds. Although these seedlings will eventually get large enough to flower, it will take years and the seedlings can become weedy.

**Mulching:** To preserve soil moisture, mulch plants once they emerge from the soil with a 2 to 3 inchthick layer of straw or bark mulch. Gladiolus don't compete well with weeds. If the area where you'd like to plant is weedy, weed before applying the mulch. The mulch should help with weed control as well.