

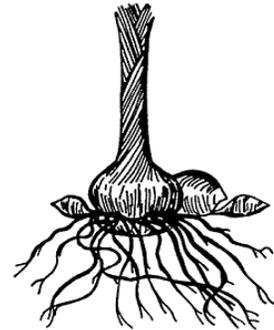
## GLADIOLUS

Gladiolus gets its name from its stiff, sword-like leaves (gladiolus is the latin word for “little sword”) . . . but what drives gardeners mad with delight are its superb and intensely showy flowers, with their astonishing range of colors and flower forms.

Glad's are among the easiest flowers to grow. They prefer full sunlight and good airflow, but will do reasonably well with a little high shade in early mornings or late afternoons.

**GLADIOLUS CORMS:** Gladioli grow from corms (thick, fleshy bulb-like) with two sets of roots. The first roots appear from around the circular markings at the base of the corm, then are followed by a new set of thick, fleshy roots which grown from the top of the corm where the buds appears. It is these second roots which build up the new corm which appears on top of the original. When you take up the corms in the fall you

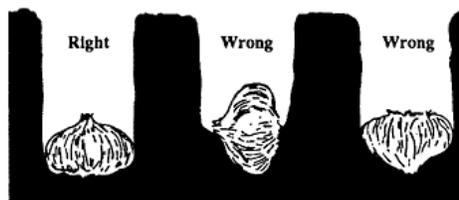
will find not only the new corm, but often tiny cormlets clustered around the base. These can be grown into blooming corms, but take up to 3 years to produce flowers.



**SOIL:** Glads do well in a variety of soil types, but are at their best in a soil with good drainage and rich in humus. Spade or till in compost or peat moss in the fall where you're planting your Glads in the following spring.

**PLANTING TIME:** Make your first plantings when the soil is warmed up to a depth of 6"; around the time that the trees leaf out. Plant early varieties first, followed by midseason and later varieties at week to two-week intervals (until the latest date you can expect blooms before the chance of frost.)

**PLANTING AND SPACING:** Plant corms 4" to 5" deep, bud pointing up; set corms deeper in light soil, and set thicker corms deeper than thinner ones. For a beautiful garden display, plant in clumps of three to six or more, with 6" to 9" apart. If planting Glads for cutting, plant in rows with corms 6" to 9" apart and 24 – 30" between rows.



**STAKING:** If you are planting extra tall or exhibition varieties, put in your stakes when you plant the corms.

**CARE AND WATERING:** Glads need plenty of water, but will not tolerate wet feet. Be sure that drainage is good and fast. Keep weeds down by shallow cultivation and hand weeding. A light mulch of straw or grass clippings around plants is also beneficial.



**FOR MAGNIFICENT CUT FLOWERS:** As soon as the first blooms begin to open, cut the bloom with a sharp knife, being sure to leave 4 to 5 leaves to keep feeding the corm. Put the spikes in a cool room in deep buckets with the lower 6" of stem in water, and leave for several hours before arranging.

**INSECT PESTS:** By far the most bothersome insect is the gladiolus thrip – a tiny insect, tan to black in color and less than 1/8" in length, which feeds on sap from leaves and flowers. Warning signs of thrips are the presence of small silvery flecks on darker colored flowers and foliage. Take immediate action using malathion, methoxychlor, carbaryl, diazinon or dimethoate. Also dust corms before planting and after digging in the fall, as extra protection against thrips.

**STORAGE OVER WINTER:** After the leaves turn brown in the fall, or before danger of frost, dig the corms, cut off the foliage, and spread the corms to dry in a shaded place. After about 10 days, clean off the corms by separating the new corm from the old dried corm. The two parts should snap apart easily by hand, leaving a scar on the new corm. Remove the loose husks leaving the wrapper husks intact. Remove any small cormlets and place in a labeled paper bag for winter storage. Store over the winter in a dry, dark place at 40 to 50 degrees F.

