



How to Grow Gladiolus

The gladiolus is an easy to grow flower, valued for its use in flower arrangements. The tall spikes of large blossoms come in a variety of colors, including white, pink, orange, yellow, red, purple, and even green. 'Glads' grow from **corms**, and most varieties are not winter hardy in Colorado. They must be lifted in the fall, or treated as annuals and replanted each year.

At a Glance

Sun: Full sun

Soil: Sandy loam enriched with compost

Water: Average

Fertilizer: Water soluble fertilizer when plants are 6-10 inches tall and again when the buds show color

Where to plant: Gladioli are native to South Africa, and grow best on a **sunny site** in sandy loam soil with good drainage. Mix compost into the soil to help with water drainage and fertility.

When to plant: Gladiolus may be planted about 2 weeks before the last spring frost, and will begin flowering 70 to 90 days from planting. For a continuous harvest of cut flowers, plant every two weeks until early summer.

How to Grow: Place corms pointed side up, about 4 times as deep as their diameter. (A one inch corm would be planted 4 inches deep, and 1 ¼ inch corm would be planted 5 inches deep, etc.) Space corms 5-8 inches apart. For the best effect, plant corms in groups of 7 or more.

Gladiolus flower spikes blow over easily in the wind, so put in stakes or other support structures when you plant them. Apply a water-soluble fertilizer when the plants are 6-10 inches tall, and again when the buds begin to show color. 'Glads' don't compete well with other plants so for best results, keep the area free of weeds. Mulching around the plants will help conserve water moisture as well as suppress weed growth.

In the Denver area, dig up corms for winter storage before the first frost. Clean off corms, and cut stalk ½ inch from corm, and let them cure for 1-2 weeks in a warm, airy location. At this point the corms you planted last year will easily break off the bottoms of the new corms that developed over the summer growing period. Discard the old, spent corms, and store the large new ones in plastic mesh bags, paper bags, or nylon pantyhose legs. Store them in a place that is dark, dry, and cool--ideally between 35 degrees and 45 degrees. The cooler, the better, as long as they don't freeze. Plant gladiolus again the next spring for another year of beautiful blooms.