



About Gladiolus : Gardeners tend to have a love/hate relationship with gladiolus; very few people sit on the fence. Gladiolus hybridizing is a hot area in the horticulture world right now, with breathtaking results. Tall gladiolus bulbs are the biggest anywhere in America and it's not uncommon for customers to ask "Are you sure you didn't send me small potatoes?" Trying gladiolus for the first time? Start with these lunkers.

Outdoor Beds

1. Find a location where the soil drains well. If there are still water puddles 5-6 hours after a hard rain, scout out another site. Or amend the soil with the addition of organic material to raise the level 2-3" to improve the drainage. Peat moss, compost, ground bark or decomposed manure all work well and are widely available. While gladiolus aren't fussy about soil, they will not survive in soggy soil or standing water.
2. Site your plants where they will receive full sun.
3. Dig holes and plant the corms 6"-7" deep and about 6"-8" apart. While gladiolus may be planted more shallowly, bigger bulbs perform better with deep planting and the extra soil around the base of the flower stalks helps support the tall flower-laden stems. Plant the bulbs with the flattened side down and the growing point facing up. Because gladiolus have a tall slim profile groupings of a dozen or more are most visually impactful. Many growers plant gladiolus at two-week intervals to extend the blooming season.
4. After planting, water your gladiolus generously, soaking the soil to settle it around the corms. Roots and sprouts will form shortly although it sometimes takes a little while for the shoots to appear when the corms are planted deeply. (If the soil is still quite cool in your area, wait until it warms before planting.)
5. Water periodically during the growing season if rain does not occur, keeping in mind that weekly deep waterings are better than lighter drinks every day or two. About 1" of water per week is a good estimate of the amount needed during active growth periods.
6. When in bloom, feel free to cut gladiolus stems for bouquets. If you want to include foliage in your arrangements cut sparingly as these leaves are needed to nourish the bulb for next year's show. If you live in a cold region where your variety choice isn't winter hardy and you have no plans to dig the corms and save them for next year, cut as much as you like.
7. After blooming has finished for the season leave the foliage in place; don't cut it off. The leaves will gather sunlight, create food through photosynthesis and strengthen the bulb for the future. Water as needed. Leaves and stalks may be removed when they yellow.
8. If you live in an area where your gladiolus aren't winter hardy and you want to save them for next spring, dig the corms after the first frost, cut the stems to 2", wash the soil off, dry for a few days and then store in a cool place.



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