

Care of House and Garden Plants

Hints on Growing GLADIOLUS

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by

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The gladiolus is a popular flower because of its variety of colors and dual use as a garden flower and cut flower. "Glads" grow from a bulb-like structure called a corm. A corm is a fleshy underground part which functions primarily as storage tissue.

Soil

- A soil which is sandy or light in texture is best.
- Clay soil can be used satisfactorily if peat moss is added.
- Use 5-10-5 fertilizer, 2 pounds per 100 square feet, before planting and rake into soil.
- Repeat when flower spike is visible.

Planting

- Plant any time from mid-April to mid-July.
- To insure flowers until fall, plant successively every two to three weeks.
- Pick a sunny spot away from trees and shrubbery.
- In sandy soil, plant corm (large size) 6" deep.
- In heavier soil, 3 to 4 inches deep.
- For cut flowers, plant corms 3 to 4 inches apart and in rows 2 to three feet apart.
- For border flowers, plant in groups of 10 to 20, 6 inches apart.

Cultivation

- For best possible growing conditions, eliminate weeds; water thoroughly during dry periods.

Cutting flowers

- Use sharp knife or shears.
- Cut when 1 to 4 florets have opened.
- Leave 4 to 5 leaves on the plant to permit food production for corm.
- Cut flowers early morning or late afternoon.
- Place cut stems in very warm (100-110°F.) water for about 2 hours.
- Place flowers in arrangements.

Winter Storage

- Dig up corms in early October; weather permitting, leave outside to dry.
- When brought inside, place them in a dry, cool spot with good air circulation for continued drying.
- When completely dry, remove the top, loosen scales, and the old corm.
- Corms can then be placed in a paper bag but leave the top open for aeration.

Diseases

- **Corm Rot.**—Corm has a brown or black rot at the base, roots brown and die.
- **Mosaics.**—Leaves yellowish-green mottling, stunted. Flower petals mottled.
- **Scab.**—Reddish-brown spots on leaves; then become larger and appear at the base of the stem; final stem will rot.

- **Botrytis Blight.**—Irregular brownish spots often covered with a gray mold on leaves, stems, flowers and corms.

Control

- For the above named disease examine corms before planting; discard any diseased corms. Treat remaining corms with one of the following: Calomel, Ceresan, or solution of corrosive sublimate. Spray Zineb 75% wettable powder 1 1/3 Tablespoons per gallon or dust with Terraclor 10% dust in combination with Captan 7-10% dust (50-50) til foliage is lightly covered. Check with local garden center for the control material they have available.

Pests

- **Thrips.**—Alligator-shaped insects about 1/16 inch long, black to pale orange in color; injure corms, foliage, and flowers. Winter is passed on stored corms which become brown, roughened, and often fail to germinate. Thrips feed and multiply on the flowers and foliage. Foliage becomes streaked or silvered; flower buds may fail to open and, if they do, they are often deformed.
- **Control.**—**Bulbs:** Apply 5% DDT dust or 1% Lindane dust to corms before

storing them. **Plants:** Spray plants every 10 days with either:

	100 Gal. of Water	1 Gal. of Water
20% Lindane emulsion, or	1½ pts.	1½ tsp.
57% Malathion emulsion, or	1½ pts.	1½ tsp.
50% DDT wettable powder,	2 lbs.	2 tbsp.

or **Dust** plants every ten days with:
1% Lindane dust, or
4% Malathion dust, or
5% DDT dust.

— **Aphids.**—Soft bodied, pale green to black insects about 1/8 inch long, suck juices from new growth or bases of buds. Both the adults and immature nymphs are pear-shaped but only the adults possess wings. Their feeding reduces the vigor of the plants and causes leaves to curl and flowers to become distorted. Honeydew liberated by the aphids adheres to the foliage and serves as a medium for,

and is turned black by, a sooty mold fungus. This adds further to the disfigurement of the plant.

— **Control.**—Spray plants with either:

	100 Gal. of Water	1 Gal. of Water
20% Lindane emulsion, or	1½ pts.	1½ tsp.
57% Malathion emulsion, or	1½ pts.	1½ tsp.
25% Diazinon emulsion,	1½ pts.	1½ tsp.

or **Dust** plants with:
2% Lindane dust, or
5% Malathion dust, or
2% Diazinon dust.

— **Red Spider Mites.**—Not insects, but red or greenish red creatures about 1/50 inch long, that are closely allied to spiders. They feed by piercing tissues and sucking up the liberated plant juices, thus reducing the vigor of the plant. Infested foliage becomes stippled, yellow, and then dies; infested flowers are discolored and pale.

Mites can be detected by forcibly jarring a portion of the foliage over a white piece of paper; mites will appear as tiny moving specks.

— **Control.**—Spray plants with either:

	100 Gal. of Water	1 Gal. of Water
18.5% Kelthane emulsion, or	1 pt.	1 tsp.
25% Aramite emulsion, or	1 pt.	1 tsp.
57% Malathion emulsion	1½ pts.	1½ tsp.

A second spray in 7-10 days may be necessary.

References

- Better Homes and Gardens Garden Book, 2nd edition
Meredith Publishing Company
Pennsylvania State University Agricultural Extension Service, Circular 497.
- Plant Disease Handbook by Cynthia Westcott
D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc.