

GLADIOLUS CULTURE

The Gladiolus is a member of the family Iridaceae, which also includes the Iris, Crocus, and Freesia. About two hundred species of gladioli are known, most of them are natives of South Africa but a few belong to the Mediterranean regions. However, only about twenty species are important in the development of our modern horticultural varieties, all of which are of hybrid origin.

The so-called bulb of a gladiolus is really a corm. A corm differs from a bulb mainly in that it is a solid structure whereas a bulb is composed of scales which are either separate from each other or wrapped tightly around each other. The gladiolus corm lives one year only but a new corm is formed each year on top of the old one.

LOCATION

Gladioli thrive best in an open sunny location. Areas near large shrubs or trees should be avoided because of their demands on soil moisture and plant food. Poorly drained soils should also be avoided. Change locations each year.

SOIL AND FERTILIZERS

Gladioli can be grown successfully on a wide range of soil types provided that the underdrainage is adequate. Organic matter adds body to sandy soils as well as improves the water holding capacity. Manure is the main source of organic matter, and usually one-half ton per 1000 sq. feet should meet the organic requirements of most soils. A complete fertilizer having an analysis is 5% nitrogen, 20% phosphorus and 20% potash (5-20-20). This may be applied when the fertility levels are known and low.

(continued)

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