

**JOIN NORTH AMERICAN GLADIOLUS COUNCIL**

Receive four GLAD WORLD publications yearly.

Member dues are \$25.00 per person annually.

\$5.00 for each additional person per household.

Publication includes listing of shows, winning cultivar reports, chemical and cultural updates,

Cataloger ads, Talk Radio, where you can ask any questions about glads, and much more.

Visit our website at: [www.gladworld.org](http://www.gladworld.org)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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Include a check or money order, made payable to NAGC or pay with PayPal on the gladworld.org website:

**Joe Steffen, 47 Coy Park Dr, Newark, IL 60541-9145**

**joesteffen@hotmail.com**

Any material in this booklet can be copied and used to assist others in growing gladiolus.

Thank you, North American Gladiolus Council.



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## HOW TO GROW GLORIOUS GLADIOLUS (QUEEN OF THE CUT FLOWER)

By: North American Gladiolus Council

### INTRODUCTION

The North American Gladiolus Council appreciates your interest in Gladiolus. This booklet contains cultural information to assist you. We are dedicated to making your gladiolus experience enjoyable. Our informative quarterly publication, Glad World, can be received by joining our organization.

### BUYING CORMS

Most people start their adventure with glads purchased at a Garden Center. Since they are limited to shelf space, they can carry only a few cultivars (varieties) or mixed bags. We hope you will graduate to purchasing corms from one of our many catalogers listed on our website, [www.Gladworld.org](http://www.Gladworld.org). Catalogers have hundreds of gladiolus in all shapes, sizes and colors. Upon receipt of your gladiolus corms, if they are in paper bags, open each bag so they can air. Place the open bags in the coolest, nonfreezing location available, until you are ready to plant. Your corms (bulbs) are coming out of controlled storage (humidity and temperature) and may try to grow before planting if left packed in their shipping box. Your corms are ready to break dormancy and sprouts on the top or root nodes on the bottom may be appearing, or soon will. If you also have decided to purchase corms from a Garden Center, purchase them early, when they first appear on the shelf. Store conditions are too warm and too dry for keeping corms in excellent condition. We discourage buying store corms when they go on sale later in the season, as the corms will deteriorate, and we are afraid you will be disappointed with their overall performance.

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## EXPLANATION OF GLADIOLUS CLASSIFICATION

Gladiolus size and color are classified (described) by a number and name, when introduced. For instance, the glad "Show Star" (412). The first number (4) means the floret size is 4 ½ to 5 ½ inches across and the (12) means light yellow. Whereas the glad "Holy Moly" (213) would be 2 ½ to 3 ½ inch floret size and the (13) would indicate light yellow with conspicuous markings. Glad sizes range from 100 to 500.

The first number in the classification indicates the size of the floret, with 1 being under 2 ½ inches across, 2 being 2 ½ to 3 ½ inches, 3 being 3 ½ to 4 ½ inches, 4 being 4 ½ to 5 ½ and 5 being over 5 ½ inches across.

Any classification number ending in an odd digit (1,3,5,7,9) indicates "with conspicuous markings". For example, as above with "Holy Moly", the odd number 3 on the end indicated conspicuous markings, color intensity range described below.

<u>Intensity Range:</u>	<u>Pale</u>	<u>Light</u>	<u>Med.</u>	<u>Dark</u>	<u>Darkest</u>
White	00				
Green		02	04	06	
Yellow	10	12	14	16	
Orange	20	22	24	26	
Salmon	30	32	34	36	
Pink	40	42	44	46	
Red	50	52	54	56	58 Black/Red
Rose	60	62	64	66	68 Black/Rose
Lavender	70	72	74	76	78 Purple
Violet	80	82	84	86	
Smoky	90	92	94	96	98 Brown

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### **ENJOY GLAD SHOWS**

If you would like to personally view some beautiful and unusual cultivars, attend a gladiolus show. All the shows are listed in the spring issue of the North American Gladiolus Council Bulletin. There usually is no charge to show glads and prize money to win. Anyone can enter gladiolus shows. A novice class is usually provided for the first timers and possibly even a youth class for the children. At the shows there is always someone available to assist those entering for the first time. If you see a gladiolus you especially like at a show, write down the name and number listed on the entry tag so you may purchase that variety in the future, from a cataloger. Glads shown under a number-only are seedlings that have not been introduced and usually cannot be purchased.

### **GLADIOLUS SOCIETIES**

If you would like to meet people who enjoy growing glads, join a local society. Societies are listed on our website at [www.Gladworld.org](http://www.Gladworld.org). You may wish to join our national organization, the North American Gladiolus Council, where you can attend conventions and learn more about growing gladiolus. Glad World, our quarterly publication, includes information on upcoming shows, society activities, articles on growing and showing gladiolus. Application form is located on the back page.

### **HOW TO GROW GLORIOUS GLADIOLUS**

The book "How to Grow Glorious Gladiolus" can be viewed online on the [gladworld.org](http://gladworld.org) website. Got to the tab "About Us" and scroll down to "How to Grow Glorious Gladiolus" (book) There are 18 chapters giving a very thorough explanation.

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Most glads are sold by description and classification number. See "Gladiolus Classification."

### **SOIL PREPARATION**

We find that applying approximately one-half pound of 8-16-16 or 10-20-20, or like ratio fertilizer, per one hundred square feet will get your glads off to a good start. Do not over fertilize glads. If you apply fertilizer with a heavy hand, it would be best to apply it in the fall. Glads appreciate humus rich soil. Compost or peat moss can be worked into the soil in the spring before corms are planted, if so desired. It is not recommended to compost glad tops because disease can be carried back into the soil with the composted material. We do not recommend uncomposted animal manures or leaves on your glad patch. Uncomposted material can cause high bacteria levels and spread disease. Plow, rototill or spade your soil as you would for any other garden seed or plants. It is always best to move your glad planting from one side of your garden to the other each year. This is in case of disease carrying over in the soil, especially if you don't remove old plants. Even poorer soils can grow good glads with a little soil preparation.

### **PLANTING**

Start to plant when you would normally plant your sweet corn, after the danger of a freeze. If you are in a location where it does not freeze and the summers are hot, plant the corms early so they bloom before intense heat. Plant a few corms every ten days. Planting in this fashion allows for blooms all season long. You cannot permit the corms to freeze, but a little frost will not kill the underground corms or glad shoots. You should plant corms three to five inches deep and 4 to 12 inches apart.

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A little soil insecticide spread in the trench before covering, will discourage underground insects. Cover the corms with 2 inches of soil at planting time and later hilling in needed soil when glads are several inches above ground. This permits glads to get a quicker start especially in heavier soils. You can fill in the trench to the full depth at planting time if you wish. Before glads bloom, hilling six inches of soil up around the base of the stalk helps prevent the glads from tipping over during storms. Glads love full sun, but will do reasonably well if the shade is early morning or late afternoon. Gladiolus should be planted away from bushes, buildings, or other obstructions that impede air flow and provide competition for their growth. Water drainage is even more important. While gladiolus like plenty of water, they will not tolerate wet feet.

### **GROWING CARE**

Shallow cultivation during the growing season will control weeds and allow the soil to air, especially if you are in a wet location. If you prefer, a light layer of organic mulch such as peat moss or straw between the rows will save moisture and prevent weeds. Weed preventor, sold at most Garden Centers, can be used on glads to help prevent weeds, without any ill effect to the glads. Although some gardeners do not spray their glad patch, we find that spraying with a systemic insecticide which controls Thrips every ten days to three weeks as needed; will keep the bugs away that spread disease. Organic gardeners can use sticky traps and general organic methods that control insects on their other plants. (CAUTION - follow all chemical label directions.) Glads may be staked if in windy locations. Miniatures are a good buy for limited space gardens and are shorter, making them easier to care for and less apt to tip over.

### **FALL CORM CARE**

Although many people do not dig their glads and just buy new stock each year, we find removing the old plants from the garden stops carryover of disease. Dig your gladiolus in September or early October, or around six weeks after your glads have bloomed. In warm locations, where the ground does not freeze, they may be left to bloom a second year, but we find digging them and replanting keeps them healthier and reduces crowding. Loosen the soil with a spade or digging fork and pull the plants by hand. Separate the plant from the corm as close to the corm as possible, either by twisting off the top or cutting with pruning shears.

Soil should be cleaned or rinsed off with running water and corms allowed to dry in a shady location. Cure the corms in shallow layers in an airy location out of direct sunlight where temperature stays above freezing. In two to three weeks a corky layer will form between the new corm and the old mother corm and roots. Break off and discard this old corm and roots, as soon as possible. It will be more difficult to remove later. The tiny round cormels around the base of the large corm can be saved and planted to increase your stock. They are identical clones of the mother corm. If planted early in the spring, many of these cormels will produce larger corms and some will bloom in September. After cleaning, sprinkle the corms with a combination fungicide-insecticide corm dust, which can be purchased at your local Garden Center. Storing them in shallow trays or mesh bags in a room with good air circulation and temperatures between 38 and 48 degrees is optimum. Usually this is the coldest, nonfreezing section of your basement. Glads will tolerate up to 55-degree storage temperature, but lower is better. (Revised 4-24-2023)

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