

How to Grow Glorious Gladiolus

Chapter Nine

CLASSIFICATION

The need for a classification system began and evolved almost from the beginning of the formation of the New England Gladiolus Society (N.E.G.S.). At first, they sought color charts out as a more accurate means of describing the color of a gladiolus, both for show and catalog descriptions.

The first color work most often used for general descriptions was "Color Standards and Nomenclature" by Robert Ridgway, published in 1912. This was a small book containing 53 plates of color variations, with seven values for each color, running between white and black. There were 1113 examples in all. It used names for the colors rather than any type of color coding. Primrose Yellow and Methyl Blue were two examples.

When Ridgway's work went out of print, Eugene N. Fischer produced a color chart for gladiolus, which was first published by N.E.G.S. in 1933. This chart had 18 colors with seven color graduations from light to dark. Some growers still use this color chart today.

In 1944 at an N.E.G.S. Conference in Philadelphia, the classification system that was much the same as the one today was adopted, using the three digit size and color code. The main difference was an AOC class (any other color) in which the brown colors and other color combinations not easily classified were placed. There was also a designation of "F" (formal) and "I" (informal) given each glad. Formal refers to parallel placement of florets on the spike and informal refers to the zigzag placement of florets. Australia still uses this designation today.

The North American Gladiolus Council (N.A.G.C.) used the same classification system adding bold face type for registered glads and adding blooming times. The N.A.G.C. and N.E.G.S. classification systems merged in 1964.

N.A.G.C. at its convention adopted a final modification of the gladiolus classification system in January 1972, which has been used since January 1973 to the present time. The 1972 classification expanded the number of color classes and regrouped them in what may be a more logical order. In recent years it has not been apparent that there is a problem with the color classification system.

An explanation and chart of the classification system follow. An example using the chart is: 534 Parade Lar. 70 M. This shows the gladiolus named Parade has florets measuring 5 1/2 inch or larger and is a medium salmon. It was introduced by Larus in 1970 and is a midseason bloomer.

Every gladiolus cultivar is assigned a three-digit classification number. The first digit indicates the floret size, the second digit the basic color and the third digit the depth of color.

To determine the size, the diameter of the lowest floret is measured without spreading or flattening any petal. The following table shows size limits for the various first digits:

1. Under 2 1/2 inches - Miniature gladiolus (100 size)
2. 2 1/5 up to 3 1/2 inches - Small gladiolus (200 size)
3. 3 1/2 up to 4 1/2 inches - Medium gladiolus (300 size)
4. 4 1/5 up to 5 1/2 inches - Large gladiolus (400 size)
5. Over 5 1/2 inches - Giant gladiolus (500 size)

The second digits from 0 through 8 follow a logical sequence of spectrum order from yellow-green through yellow, orange, red, purple and violet. Since white does not fit into the series, it is arbitrarily placed first; unmarked whites have the last two digits 00 and those with markings as 01. Although pink and red are in fact in the same color group, a separate digit is assigned to pink

because of common usage and the large number of pink and red gladiolus cultivars of differing color intensities.

The final digit indicates depth of color, with 0 or 1 used for the lightest colors in the range, and with 8 and 9 used for the deepest ones. Even numbers represent solid colors, with inconspicuous markings. If the gladiolus has a conspicuous marking, the next higher odd number is used.

Not all possible final two digit combinations are currently in use, particularly in the more sparsely represented color ranges. The following table shows those that are currently in use. Only even numbers are listed here, but each has an associated odd number as previously mention

KEY TO CULTIVAR LIST

Size and color classes are indicated by the Code Number (see table that follows.) The first figure indicates floret size group and the last two digits give the color class. The originators' name follows and then the year the cultivar was first available at North American purchasers, followed by a rough approximation of the blooming season:

- VE (very early) - under 70 days
- E (early) - 70 to 74 days
- EM (early midseason) 75 to 79 days
- M (midseason) - 80 to 84 days
- LM (late midseason) 85-90 days
- L (late) - 91 to 99 days
- VL (very late) - 100 days or more

These dates are for large corms. Smaller sizes will bloom somewhat later.

COLOR CLASSIFICATION

Color	Pale	Light	Medium	Dark	Other
White	00				
Green		02	04	06	
Yellow	10*(1)	12	14	16	
Orange	20*(2)	22	24	26	
Salmon	30	32	34	36*(3)	
Pink	40	42	44	46	
Red		52*(4)	54	56	58 black red
Rose	60	62	64	66	68 black rose
Lavender	70	72	74	76	
Violet (Blue)	80	82	84	86	
Tan	90				
Smokies		92	94	96	
Brown					98

*Includes (1) cream, (2) buff, (3) orange scarlet and (4) red scarlet

Classification numbers ending in odd digits, 1,3,5,7,9 indicates "with conspicuous markings" for the color indicated by the even number immediately preceding the odd number. Where reduction of number of color classes is desirable at gladiolus shows, the objective may be obtained by combining closely related color classes.

Every year the North American Gladiolus Council publishes a list of the official classifications of all cultivars considered likely to appear at the shows. Each year a number of older cultivars are removed from the list. Those glads that are no longer being grown, listed in catalogs, and are not being shown, are removed from the classification list. This makes it possible to add the current year's introductions without greatly increasing the length of the list.

The classification actually serves a double purpose. Primarily it is used in establishing classes at shows, but perhaps it is just as valuable for reference since it provides an extremely concise description of each cultivar. The classification number indicates the general size and color. The name of the originator is included and the year when the cultivar was first introduced for sale in North America. Finally, in most cases there is a notation regarding its earliness or lateness of blooming.

Part of a page of the Classification List is reproduced here. For examples of the uses to which the list may be put, let us consider a few names on this page and elaborate upon the information given about them.

445 ANNA LEORAH Sprinkle 91 M

478 ANNA RUTH BueU 90 M

*572 ANNIVERSARY Marshall 71 LM

400 ANNIVERSARY WHITE

Pletcher-SummerviUe 93 M

466 ANN PHILLIP Wel 82 M

475 ANONYM Adamovic 95 LM

356 ANTARES Rob 80 M

366 ANTIQUE ROSE Martin 93 LM

ANNA LEORAH is classified 445, showing that it is a large (400 size) medium pink with conspicuous markings. It was originated by Robert Sprinkle in 1991 and it is a midseason bloomer.

ANNA RUTH, a 478, is a large (400 size) purple. Rev. Clifford Buell introduced it in 1990. It will bloom in approximately 80-84 days from planting.

ANNIVERSARY, classified a 572, is a giant (500 size) light lavender. Its year of introduction was 1971 by Mr. Marshall and it is a late midseason bloomer. The asterisk beside the name also shows that it was an All-America selection.

ANNIVERSARY WHITE, classified as a 400 is a large (400 size) pure white, with no noticeable markings. It was introduced for sale to the public in 1993 by Pletcher and Alex Summerville. It is a midseason bloomer.

ANN PHILLIP, a 466, indicates that it is a large (400 size) deep rose gladiolus with no conspicuous markings and was introduced to the public by hybridizer Peter Welcenbach in 1982. It also is a midseason bloomer.

ANONYM, classified a 475, is a large (400 size) medium lavender with conspicuous markings. Igor Adamovic in 1995 introduced it. Its blooming date is around 85-90 days from planting.

ANTARES, a 356, is classified as a deep red (300 size) glad, which was introduced in 1980 by Winston Roberts. It is a midseason bloomer.

ANTIQUEROSE, classified as a 366 is a medium (300 size) deep rose with no noticeable markings. It was introduced in 1993 by James Martin and is a late midseason bloomer.

Cultivars printed in bold type have been registered with the International Registry

maintained by the North American Gladiolus Council. A key to the abbreviations of certain originators is given on another page of the Classification List. Although the subject of classification of gladiolus may seem a bit complicated at first, the essentials are really not difficult to learn. Sometimes the color intensity of a gladiolus may not appear to fit the classification published as the final digit shown in the Classification List. In such cases it should be kept in mind that some gladiolus will differ in color intensity due to variations in culture, climate conditions and/or soil qualities. The classification designations reflect a rough "average" color intensity as observed by growers in several parts of North America. The Classification Committee meets at the NAGC convention each year and reviews any gladiolus that are thought to have been introduced under the wrong classification number. Their decisions are made and listed in the new classification list that appears in the Summer Bulletin.

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