

Heirloom Gladiolus ATOM, 1946

A primulinus glad with flowers half the size of most at 3' tall and it melds easily into perennial borders and bouquets. It won't get lost, though, because it's a brilliant red cooled by the finest edging of silver.

Noteworthy Characteristics

Shorter stature than most glads, with an eye-catching flower color that nevertheless fits well into borders.

You can always treat them like an annual but I look at it as an investment and I dig them up once all the foliage is dead in the late fall, let them dry out under a fan and then clean and store until all threat of frost has passed in my zone 6 garden. These make beautiful cut flowers.

Genus : Gladiolus

Plant Height : 1 to 3 feet

Zones : 10, 8, 9

Plant Width : 6 to 12 inches

Light : Full Sun to Partial Shade

Moisture : Medium Moisture

Growth Rate : Moderate

Maintenance : Moderate

Plant Type : Perennials

Flower Color : Red

Bloom Time : Summer

Plant Seasonal Interest : Summer Int



Plant after danger of frost is past — when you'd plant tomatoes. Glads planted in cold soils may rot. Once corms are received store till planting in a cool, dim, dry place. 45-55° F is ideal, but close will do.

For a succession of bloom plant a few every week or two till the end of early summer (for example, late June in zone 5). Don't wait too late, though, because some heirlooms need a longer season than many modern glads to bloom.

Pick a sunny site. Glads are easy and adaptable, but loose, fertile, well-drained soil with a pH of 6.5 to 6.8 is ideal for them. Avoid heavy soils that stay wet. Plant 4-6 inches apart and 2-6 inches deep, the side with the round indentation in the middle facing down. Shallow planting gives the corms warmer soil to spur growth but it may lead to a need for staking. To help avoid this, mound soil 2-3 inches around the base of the stalk later, before bloom.

Water once, but then unless it's very dry, wait till growth emerges before beginning to water regularly and deeply enough to reach the corm. Expert glad-growers often recommend mulching to maintain more even moisture. Fertilize when growth begins and again after cutting flowers, ideally with a liquid fertilizer. Don't overdo it, though. Too little is better than too much.

Glads do well in pots, too.

PROPAGATION — Dividing existing clumps is the easiest way of propagating gladioli.

THRIPS are one of the few pests that bother glads. They're almost invisible but they can be devastating.

WINTER CARE — In zones 8 and warmer (lows to 10° F), glads can stay in the ground year round. They often survive winters in zones 7, 6, and even 5.

Otherwise, glads are one of the easiest bulbs to store (if you want to). Dig 5-6 weeks after flowering or at killing frost. Cut stalk off as close to the corm as possible. Experts often recommend a 5-minute fungicide dip, or you can dust them with an insecticide-fungicide, or do nothing. Air dry for a few weeks. Store loose or in mesh bags in a cool, dry place with good air circulation, ideally at 35-45° F. In spring, break off the old, shriveled corm at the base of each new one.

CORMLETS bigger than a pea may bloom the next year, and smaller ones in two. Plant cormlets 1-2 inches deep and 1-2 inches apart, depending on size. Immediately before planting, nick, gently crack, or dissolve hard outer coats by soaking in bleach for a few hours.