

Graciously Grow Gladioli



For a riot of color and charming, decorative flowers from July to September plant gladioli successfully every two weeks from about mid-April to mid-June.

There is no other tip about cultivating easy-to-grow gladioli quite so important as succession plantings.

Introduced into Europe from South Africa little more than a century ago, this huge iridaceous genus, consisting of some 150 species, has become world leader among summer-flowering bulbs. Skillful Dutch hybridization has and is continuing to make available to the amateur gardener at low cost an almost endless choice of new and beautiful varieties.

These varieties come in a virtually unlimited range of colors, including the most delicate pastels as well as strong, bright hues.

Of the three types of gladioli hybrids for Spring planting available there is no doubt whatsoever that the large-flowered group provides the widest choice of varieties and makes the biggest impact. But the gladioli fancier will also welcome the primulus hybrids, with flower spikes about two-thirds the size of the large-flowered varieties, and the small-flowered or "Butterfly" gladioli more recently intro-

duced by the Dutch.

The successful cultivation of all types of summer-flowering gladioli is the same. Almost any soil will do but to produce the best flower spikes the soil should be enriched with humus—peat, compost or leafmould and should have good drainage. Always prepare the ground well in advance, digging at least 8-10 inches deep and working in 3 ounces of a complete garden fertilizer per square yard. Remember that gladioli do not like freshly manured ground.

Choose sunny and sheltered positions where the wind will not play havoc with tall stems. Gladioli make most decorative plants in beds and borders but don't site them with tall plants in the herbaceous border or among shrubs. For cutting purposes a sunny part of the vegetable garden is ideal.

Planting can begin any time after frost is out of the ground and it is dry enough to work the soil. Succession planting may continue, at intervals of two to four weeks, as late as mid-June for fine spikes in the Autumn.

Place the corms 5-6 inches deep and about 8 inches apart in groups or clusters of a dozen or more. If the soil is heavy place some sand underneath the corms to assist drainage,

but on lighter soils this should not be necessary. Do be sure you do not plant too shallowly for this leads to much more staking and good spikes may be lost in heavy winds.

The corms quietly send up slim green leaves in the warm moist spring weather. Hoe carefully and frequently around the plants and keep them well-watered. When leaves are about 6 inches tall give your gladioli another application of fertilizer. As the flower buds start to open the taller varieties of gladioli will need staking and this should be done so as not to damage the corms.

Always leave at least three leaves when you cut gladioli so that the young corms for the following season obtain proper nourishment. To produce healthy corms gladioli like a spell of dry weather for about six weeks after they have finished flowering, by which time the foliage will have turned brown and they will be ready for lifting.

The large-flowered hybrids are the most inexpensive adaptable and generally the most rewarding. The plants reach 3½-5 feet in height and come in all colors of the rainbow and more. They are equally at home in the garden or in vases indoors.

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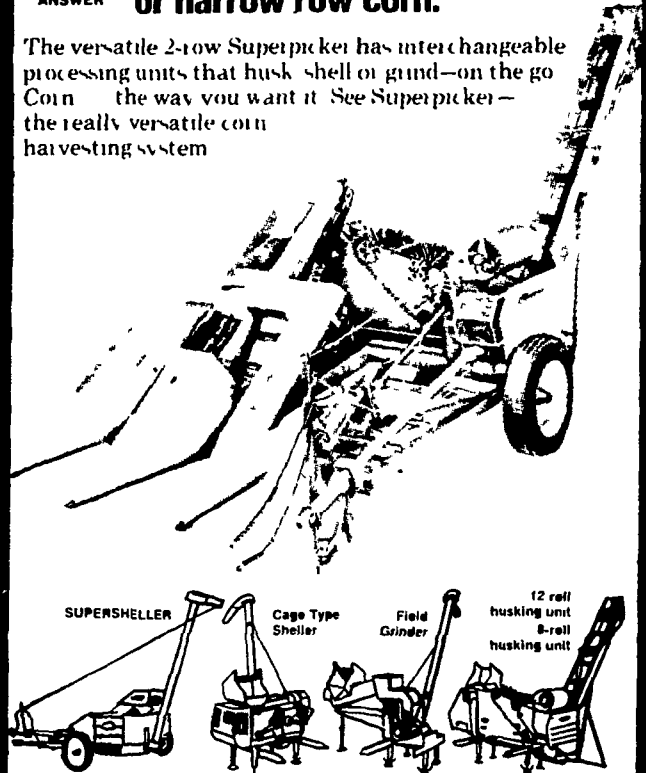
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