

Fall Care of Gladiolus

By Bill Lanning

It is getting to be the time of year for fall gardening chores. In the Midwest, it is time to think about digging gladiolus. The time to dig is before the foliage has turned completely brown. About six weeks after flowering is the best time. The stalks should be green with some browning or yellowing on the edges. If a killing frost should occur, they should be dug as soon as possible, but within a week.

Dig the corms by using a spading fork or spade. Shove the tool straight down near the plant and pull on the handle. At the same time grasp the plant and pull it from the soil. Many corms will have cormels attached. Save these for propagation to increase your supply of corms. Cut the stalk from the corm as closely as possible with pruners. Corms may be rinsed at this time to remove mud, weed seed, etc.



Put the corms and cormels in trays or baskets to dry for a few weeks. After two or three weeks, the "mother" corm will come loose from the new corm. Remove these and let dry for two-three more weeks. Do not remove the husks until spring. Corms may be stored in trays or paper sacks with the top open. Temperature should be around 35-45 degrees and not overly humid.

Some growers rinse the corms immediately after digging and then soak them for 30 minutes in a fungicide-insecticide solution. Another option would be to dust the dry corms with an all-purpose dust. Use precautions if using chemicals and follow the directions.

A good resource book is "How To Grow Glorious Gladiolus" published by The North American Gladiolus Council in 1996.

Bill Lanning is a past president of TGOA/MGCA and is a member of Men's Garden of Findlay, Ohio. Bill has gardened for 58 years and enjoys learning, traveling, meeting people and raising unusual plants. He is very serious about gladiolus, is an accredited judge and has held offices in that organization. He recently commented together with his wife, 'We will be digging probably 10 to 12 thousand this fall.' Perhaps with an invitation, they'll come help in your yard.

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