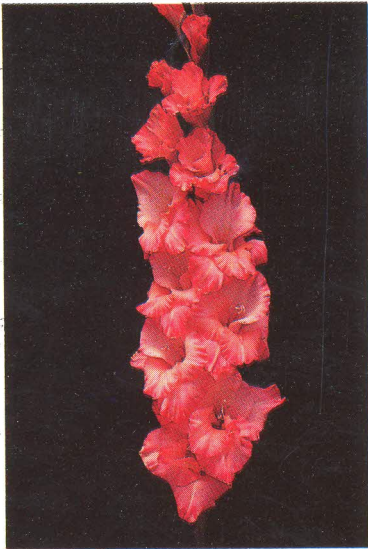




GLADIOLUS GROWING IN THE FOOT HILLS OF HIMALAYAS

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Gladiolus flowers are in demand for their elegant attractive spikes of different hues and good keeping quality. Gladiolus can be easily grown with a little care and attention in beds for garden decoration and cut flower production and also in pots for interior and outdoor decoration. In India, gladiolus has become a very popular flower and millions and millions of spikes are being sold every year. Gladiolus can be grown outdoor and under greenhouse conditions.

In the plains, gladiolus flowers are available during the winter months only. Very high temperature during the summer days may adversely affect the flower spikes. In the hilly areas (upto 2000 metres) with moderate summer, the gladiolus can be grown for almost throughout the year. In places where winter is severe, the gladiolus crop may be affected by frost.

Gladiolus cultivars can be classified into five groups based on the flower size viz. i) Miniature (florete diameter < 6.4 cm), ii) Small (6.4-8.9 cm), iii) Decorative (8.9-11.4 cm), iv) Standard or Large (11.4-14.0 cm) and v) Giant (> 14.0 cm). Gladiolus can also be classified into three groups on the basis of time to flower from the date of planting of corms - a) Early (flowering within

60 days), b) Medium (between 60-90 days) and c) Late (> 90 days).

Temperature & Light

For proper development of flowers, gladiolus is dependent on ample light, suitable temperature and plenty of soil moisture. However, there are a number of cultivars which are less sensitive to light, Gladiolus plants prefer a temperature regime between 10° and 25°C. It can, however, temporarily tolerate very high temperatures like 40° C provided the relative humidity is high and the soil is moist.

Soil

Gladiolus could be grown in any type of soil provided it is well drained. For good performance, it prefers a sandy loam soil, rich in organic matter. When the soil is of

