



trellis

How to grow Summer Flowering Favourites in a Planter

Many of our favourite summer flowering plants which can be cut and displayed indoors, such as Gladioli, Freesia and Nerine, tend to prefer rich, well drained soils in full sun.

If your growing space doesn't fit this bill, try growing them in pots in a sunnier spot and once the plants are established, slip the pots into the border to inject a shot of summer colour and perfume. Or keep them at the door to enjoy up close!

Most summer flowering plants that are grown from bulbs or corms* require similar potting and care regimes. However, Gladioli need additional help due to their top heavy, blousy blooms so we will put particular focus on them for this factsheet.

Start potting up corms from early April to enjoy your flowering stems from mid June.

**Corms can look like flattened potatoes or be similar in appearance to a crocus bulb.*



Gladioli photo By Twdragon - Own work, CC BY 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?>



What you need:

- Flower corms/bulbs of your choice
- Container (with drainage holes) **minimum** 5L/20cm diameter/20cm depth pot for bulkier gladioli
- General purpose compost
- Pea gravel
- Garden canes, garden twine, scissors, watering can

Step 1 Fill the pot one-sixth with pea gravel as the corms prefer free draining conditions. Next, fill the pot to just under half way with compost. Tap the pot on a hard surface to settle the compost and remove any air pockets.

Step 2 Taking 5 corms (for this diameter of pot), space evenly and place (with the flattened side of the corm downwards) firmly on the compost surface.

If you have chosen a taller Gladioli variety (40cm +), insert garden canes beside each corm. Do this just now before 'hiding' the corms and potentially damaging them if inserting the canes later. The tall flowered Gladioli can become top heavy and winds can easily catch and snap the stems and topple the planter.

Step 3 Cover the corms with more compost, filling the pot to approx. 2 cm down from the lip of the pot. Tap gently to remove excess air gaps. Water well—fill the pot up to the lip of the pot. It will freely drain out through the bottom of the pot.

If using canes, take garden twine and knot twine around the first cane close to the compost level then wrapping the twine over and around each cane, work in a helter-skelter fashion up the canes to form a cylindrical mesh to support the growing stems. Place the pot in a light, cool but frost-free spot. Maintain a damp compost, ensuring not to over-water.



Step 2

Insert corms and canes

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Step 4

Placing outdoors Once the likelihood of frost has passed, place the pot in sunny spot and water as required to keep the compost damp, but not wet, remembering that pots tend to dry out more quickly than garden soil.

Feeding Once the flower spike starts to develop, apply a potash feed (or tomato feed) every two weeks. Continue to feed the plant for 2–3 weeks after flowering which allows the corm to build up its energy levels for the following year's growing season.

Step 5

Saving corms for growing again next year . After you have enjoyed the flowers, allow the pot of compost to dry out thoroughly, and once the flower spikes have 'died back' (leaves have turned yellowish brown), lift the whole plant out of the compost. Snap the corms from the stems, discarding the leaves onto the compost heap if the leaves have no signs of disease. Allow the corms to dry out naturally for a few weeks.

Snap off the baby corms that have developed over the past growing season from the mother corm, discarding the old one. The new corms must be kept cool and dry, but frost-free until they are planted the following spring.



Top Tips

To ensure a succession of colour throughout the later summer, plant corms in fortnightly intervals from April to July.

If cutting gladioli stems for indoor display, always use secateurs or a knife: scissors will crush the stem's cells inhibiting good water uptake when kept in a vase. Always harvest stems in the morning.

Cut gladioli stems when 2-3 flower buds are open, the others will quickly follow.

Gladioli stems are top heavy. Ensure you use a suitable vase or jug to display them in. Change water every two to three days and nip out any dead flowers as they develop.

Personal preference? I like to see the spike tip of the gladioli flower stem but others remove it to encourage more flowers below.

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