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Photos courtesy of Bay City Flower Co., Inc.

Gladiolus Nanus Group
Miniature sword lily, Miniature
Gladiolus, Butterfly Gladiolus

BOTANICAL NAME

Gladiolus Nanus Group
(glad-ee-O-lus NAY-nus)
(Plural: *Gladioli*, *Gladioluses*, *Gladiolus*)

COMMON NAMES

Miniature sword lily,
Miniature *Gladiolus*, Butterfly *Gladiolus*

Note: The term "gladiola" is often—but mistakenly—used as a common name for *Gladiolus*, which can sound like "gladiolas." In formal English, "gladiola" and "gladiolas" are not recognized words.

DESCRIPTION

Potted *Gladioli* typically have six to 10 funnel-shaped flowers/flower buds, in alternating facings, mostly on one side of 1-

2-foot-long stems. Blossoms often have blotched colorations and ruffly petal edges.

COLORS

Gladioli are available in a wide range of reds, oranges, yellows, greens and violets—every hue except blue. Bicolor varieties also are available.

DECORATIVE LIFE

Potted *Gladioli* should last from two to three weeks, depending on care, environmental conditions and stage of maturity at the time of sale.

AVAILABILITY

Gladioli plants are available from about mid-May through early October.

in-store and consumer care

LIGHT Potted *Gladioli* require lots of bright light. Some direct sunlight is OK.

WATER These flowering plants are grown from corms, which require only moderate water when in bloom. Soil should be well drained and watered thoroughly only when the soil surface is dry.

In addition, *Gladioli* are extremely sensitive to fluoride in water, so do not water these plants with tap water that contains fluoride. Effects include deterioration of petal edges, failure of florets to open and develop normally, "burning" of the bud/floret sheath, and yellowing or darkening of leaf edges.

TEMPERATURE Indoors, *Gladioli* perform best when the environment is moderately cool to temperate—65 F to 70 F during the daytime and 60 F to 65 F at night.

HUMIDITY These plants prefer moderately humid air, so placing the pots on pebble trays or occasionally misting the air around the plants can be beneficial.

FERTILIZER None is required at the retailer and consumer levels.

ETHYLENE SENSITIVITY Ethylene does not affect open *Gladiolus* florets, but it can cause buds to shrivel and prevent them from opening. Therefore, make sure your purchases are treated with an ethylene inhibitor at the grower level or during shipping. In

addition, keep them away from sources of ethylene in your stores such as ripening fruit, decaying flowers and foliage, automobile exhaust, and tobacco smoke.

challenges

LEAF YELLOWING/BROWNING This is typically a result of overwatering, watering with fluoridated water and/or too-low light conditions.

PREMATURE FLOWER BUD DEATH The most likely cause is exposure to ethylene, but



other possibilities include watering with fluoridated water, too-low light conditions and too-high temperatures.

PETAL EDGE "BURN" The most common causes are watering with fluoridated water and too much exposure to direct sunlight.

fun facts

WHAT'S IN A NAME *Gladiolus* is the Latin term for "small sword," a reference to the shape of the leaves and the derivation of the common name "sword lily."

The hybrid name "Grandiflorus" means large flowered (see "Cut Flower of the Month" on Page 18), and the hybrid name "Nanus" (NAY-nus) means dwarf.

FAMILY MATTERS *Gladiolus* is a member of the *Iridaceae* (*Iris*) family. Close relatives include *Iris*, montbretia (*Crocasmia*), *Crocus*, *Freesia*, African corn lily (*Ixia*) and bugle lily (*Watsonia*).

HOME SWEET HOME *Gladioli* are native primarily to tropical Africa and South Africa but also to Europe, particularly the Mediterranean region, and the Middle East (from Turkey south to Yemen). **sfr**

purchasing tips

- Ideally, buy *Gladioli* plants when only one bloom on each stem is partially open and most of the flower buds are showing some color.
- Check flower buds, stems and leaves for bruising, browning, yellowing, gray mold (*Botrytis*) and rot.

Some information provided by:
Bay City Flower Co., Inc. www.baycityflower.com
Botanica, by R.G. Turner Jr. and Ernie Wasson
Chain of Life Network®, www.chainoflife.org
Dictionary of Plant Names, by Allen J. Coombes
Hortus Third, by Liberty Hyde Bailey and Ethel Zoe Bailey
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