

# How to Grow Glorious Gladiolus

## Chapter Twelve

### THE NEW AND EXOTIC

Over the years we have seen many changes in the gladiolus. Some are the result of better hybridizing and better selection. An early example was the breeding of the cultivar Picardy, which typifies the larger standard gladiolus. This was a great break through in not only being outstanding as a cultivar for its time, but the fact that it would open from tight bud. This enables the growers to ship nationwide. This demonstrates how one trait in a particular cultivar can increase its overall value.

Another example was the development of the ruffled cultivars. As a long time friend of the late Winston Robert, I was familiar from the start with the breeding problems involved. It wasn't easy because after he was successful in developing the ruffles, it took a long time to develop the correct plant to go with it. Then after producing the cultivars, the flower industry was slow to accept them.

Development of the small sizes has been slow, but has expanded with florist demands and the cost of shipping the larger sizes. The smaller size has probably increased the development of the Faceup types, and the fact that the arrangement can be viewed from any angle.

We displayed new types and color forms at the FTD and Designers Convention in 1994 and they were very well received. Market tests proved good also. New colors and floret forms, some look like lilies and others resemble tigridias, a member of the gladiolus family. Quite a few people didn't recognize them as gladiolus.

In the last few years we have been testing cultivars originated in Japan, small and with the florets spaced some distance apart on the stem. They are quite decorative, but could use improved colors. These cultivars are popular with Oriental flower designers, who like the graceful and open look.

Some Primulinus glads, so popular in Great Britain, are much improved over the past cultivars. Some are very small and include odd or exotic colors and look promising for breeding. Most corm catalogs carry at least a few classed as exotic. They may be anything from odd shaped florets, unusual colors, very early or anything different from the normal. We plant breeders like to try these to increase our gene pool. They may not be as attractive as we would like, but they can be a source of material.

The doubles and multi petals may be falling out of favor or awaiting new developments. One of the dramatic changes in recent years in the acceptance of new things, is the increase in farmer markets and increase in direct sales to stores.

Much work in species is being done by Revivim Nurseries in Kibbutz Revivim, Israel. They are combining species to develop a glad that will flower in the cooler temperatures and lower light levels that occur in the winter in Israel, Florida and California. They have developed twenty or more suitable cultivars.

Our sales are wholesale only to establish clients and we sell everything from our seedling field and research plot. They are very popular and it gives them ideas on arrangements and tells us what their interests are. The first thing arrangers look at on delivery, are the seedlings groups.

My philosophy is, if you are growing glads, a hybridizing program should be a part of your operation and don't be afraid to display it. From what I have seen of the many people hybridizing and the many companies working on new things, it should make things interesting in the next few years.

By: John Cook

## EXOTICS AND UNUSUALS

If you want to work with the exotics and the unusual, there is a very limited number available today, compared to the other gladiolus. They are usually listed under Dragons, lacinated, doubles or multi petaled, narrow petaled, face up, fragrant and maybe to a lesser degree, highly ruffled or different color combinations. I will say a little about each and try to list a few cultivars still available today. They are more apt to be listed as novelties, than exotic, by catalogers.

Dragons may be close to extinction, as none are known to be growing in the United States, at this time. They possibly can still be found somewhere in the world, growing in the wild. Dragons were said to have had long, sprawling or twisted petals, lacinations and spurs on the petals. Names like **Shaggy Dragon**, **White Dragon**, **Fairy Dragon** and **Dinosaur** were surely doomed for extinction.

If it wasn't for an accident of nature, I would probably have to report the same demise of the lacinated glads. Not owning a lacinated glad. Miles Labrum of Utah crossed a 420 seedling onto **Calumet Song**, a 524. Accidentally, he came up with the first new lacinated glad to be introduced in decades. **Orchid Lace**, a rose pink and white lacinated cultivar will be introduced through Summerville Glads of Glassboro, New Jersey in 1997. There is now new hope.

Doubles or multi petaled cultivars may be the next hardest type to locate. This may be because petaloids or knuckling in exhibition spikes would have a point deduction against them. Exotics never really found their place in exhibition shows. They should have been looked at for their uniqueness, not bud count or placement. Few are found today, as doubles fell out of favor in the mid 1960's and were not propagated after that.

At present, there is a search going on by Robert Euer of California, a member of the old timers committee, for the gladiolus **Bird of Paradise**. This committee's goal is to save the oldies but goodies for the future. This committee operates through NAGC and may be your only opportunity to find some of the old exotics. This may be our only hope to save our gene pool for future hybridizers. Kingfisher Glads of Madera, California catalog many old timers.

Two doubles that I have raised that I feel may still be available are **Spring Time**, classified a 470, a light lavender introduced by E. H. Doerr in 1969 (not to be confused with a glad later introduced by the same name) and **Sister Fortuna**, a 433 salmon introduced in 1971 by Dr. Griesbach. I feel your best place right now to find doubles or other exotics, may be in Europe. Two catalogers where you may seek the unusual are: Dave's Memory Garden of Latvia, Europe and Lukon Glads of Sadska, Czech Republic.

Now I will mention a few exotics that are a little easier to find. There are a few narrow petaled glads, such as **Jester**, a 417 yellow and red glad introduced in 1963 and to a lesser amount, **Jester Gold**, a 416 introduced in 1975. Both will throw narrow petaled blooms occasionally (thus the name Jester.) **Lady Jester**, a 311 creamy white with red markings by R.G. Martin will generally be narrow petaled. These glads are unusual and available. Some of these are available thru Pleasant Valley Glads of Agawam, Massachusetts.

Face-ups are miniatures that are popular today for they are used in small arrangements by florists. Bob Euer of California still has **Blue Tina**, a 183, violet with a white throat and **Fancy Tina**, a 133 salmon. **Kewpie**, a 212 introduced in 1986 by Carl Fischer, is in his catalog and his 1983 **Red Eye**, a 157 dark red, is also still available. **Pink Button**, a 145 medium pink was introduced in 1972 by Hesselton and is still being grown today by the old timers. I would expect with the cost of shipping increasing, there will be more work done on miniatures, which would include face-ups. You may locate some face-ups listed with Blooming Prairie Gardens of

Blooming Prairie, Minnesota or Noweta Glads of St. Charles, Minnesota.

Quite a bit of work is being done today by a few people to improve the fragrance in glads, and many faintly to heavily scented glads are on their way. Adamovic Gladiolus, Bratislava, Slovakia lists the following: **AZ Fragrance**, 420, a buff red; **Fragrant Red**, 454, a scarlet to red mildly fragrant; **Fragrant Lemon**, 512, a lemon yellow gold and **Aroma**, 426, a medium orange as well as several other cultivars.

In 1960, heavy ruffling was the unusual, but now is much more commonplace. In 1976 **Frizzled Coral Lace**, a 355 fancy coral pink was introduced by O. Johnson and in 1990 **Ruffled Petticoat**, a 300 white by Cliff Hartline was introduced. These both have extreme heavy substance and ruffling and are available today. In 1986 **Bambino**, a 360 very light rose and 1990 **White Bambino**, a 300 white, both from Adamovic, should also go on this list of extreme ruffling. There are so many ruffled cultivars today that I have to stop somewhere. Before I do, I will mention **Bridesmaid**, a 422 heavily ruffled pink, white and lime green introduced in 1977 by Doerr; **Capri**, a 441 ruffled pink and cream by Vincent and in 1991, **Fire and Ice**, a 441 ruffled pinkish white, with a rose throat, by Walker. These are beautiful glads, but slightly less ruffled than those previously referred to. Some of the above mentioned glads are available thru Peeters Enterprises, Mitchell, Ontario, Canada

Next to be mentioned are the multi color, unusual colored and speckled glads. A whole book could be published just on these, so I will try to keep it short and hope not to offend anyone. In 1993, Carl Fischer introduced **Candy Cane**, a 455 red and white irregular speckled cultivar. In 1978 **Chocolate Ripple**, also by Fischer was introduced. It is a chocolate color, evenly veined in gold. Both are definitely unusual. In 1982, Summerville Glads introduced **Shiloh**, a 315 with light ruffling and red, yellow and white florets. Through the years, it has produced many seedlings also classified in the unusual. Lastly, I will mention **Janus**, introduced in 1989, by Cliff Hartline. It is a novelty medium rose blending to a deeper rose throat, with a white line on each petal and silver picotee edging. The most unusual feature is the back side of each petal is buffy lime in color. The above mentioned glads are all still available today. Gruber's Glad Garden of Davenport, Iowa, catalog a few of the multi-colored cultivars. If you are looking for the unusual, you will have a fine selection to choose from, but far less Exotics are available.

All the catalogers mentioned in the above chapter advertise in the NAGC Bulletin, the Glad World. Please check the Bulletins for their present address.

By: Cliff Hartline