

Include gladiolus in an August birthday bouquet by using a few tall stems as the main feature and adding shorter flowers around them. Choose colors that suit the recipient, then place the stems in a sturdy vase with enough water to support the arrangement.

Choose the gladiolus stems

Gladiolus is an August birth flower, making it a fitting choice for a birthday bouquet. Its tall spikes carry several blooms along each stem, so even a small number can give the arrangement height and shape.

Look for firm stems with some open flowers and several buds that show color. Fully open spikes can look generous at once, while stems with buds may continue to open after the bouquet is given. Avoid stems with soft spots or flowers that already look wilted.

Gladiolus comes in many colors, including white, pink, red, orange, yellow and purple. Pick one color for a simple arrangement, or combine two or three shades for more contrast.

Pair them with shorter flowers

Gladiolus has a strong vertical line. Rounder flowers placed lower in the bouquet can balance that height without hiding the spikes. Roses, carnations and chrysanthemums are useful choices, depending on what is fresh and available.

Keep the palette limited if the gladiolus is brightly colored. For example, pair orange gladiolus with cream carnations and green foliage, or use pink gladiolus with white roses. The companion flowers should fill the space around the stems rather than compete with their height.

Build a balanced arrangement

Start with a clean, sturdy vase. Add water, then hold the gladiolus stems against the outside of the vase to judge their height before cutting. A vase with a narrower opening can help keep the tall stems together.

- Place the tallest gladiolus stems near the center or toward the back.
- Use shorter stems at the sides to soften the outline.
- Add companion flowers below the gladiolus blooms.
- Fill gaps with foliage, keeping leaves above the waterline.

Turn the vase as you work so you can see the arrangement from each side. Leave some space between the spikes, allowing their individual flowers to remain visible.

Prepare the bouquet for giving

If you are giving the bouquet without a vase, gather the stems securely but do not crush them. Wrap the stems in damp paper and cover the damp section to protect clothing and furniture during the trip. Keep the bouquet upright where practical, and place it in water as soon as possible.

A short card can mention that gladiolus is an August birth flower. If you know the recipient has a suitable vase, leave enough stem length for them to adjust the arrangement at home.

Help the flowers last

Before arranging, cut the stems with clean, sharp shears and remove any leaves that would sit underwater. Use fresh water and flower food according to its packet directions. Check the water daily, top it up as needed and replace it if it becomes cloudy.

Keep the bouquet away from direct sun, heat and ripening fruit. Remove faded flowers as the blooms along each gladiolus spike open and age.

A few well placed gladiolus stems can give an August birthday bouquet its shape, while the shorter flowers add color around them.

Further reading: more info