

Gladiolus

Post Harvest Technology

Grading

Spikes are graded into three lots, based on overall quality, variety, colour spike length and number of florets per spike. After grading, they should be bunched in units of 12 and held together by rubber bands.

Packaging

Bundles of 12-spikes each are first wrapped in corrugated paper for protection from sudden temperature fluctuations, bruising and moisture loss. Then they are fastened with rubber bands, packed in ribbed cardboard boxes and transported to their destinations. They remain fresh during transit for 1-3 days, depending upon the weather conditions.

Storage

Graded spikes should not be stored for more than 24 hours before they are packed and transported. These should be kept at a minimum temperature of 4-8°C in upright position until packed for transportation. To prevent desiccation before and after grading, the spikes can also be kept in floral preservatives.

Spikes are stored in refrigerated van for transporting them to long distance. Refrigerated storage increases the shelf life of the flowers without any addition to the spike weight.

Vase-life

Upon arrival at destination, the spikes should be immediately taken out of the cardboard boxes. About 2.5 cm long basal ends of the spikes should be cut off and the spikes placed in acid solution having pH between 3-3.5 to increase the shelf life. Spikes can also be kept in floral preservatives containing sucrose (3000-5000ppm) and Streptocycline. Spikes should be opened at a moderate temperature of 21-23°C, in diffused light but not in the open sun. It is advisable to store the spikes in air-conditioned chambers for sale. Vase-life of gladiolus spikes varies from 5-10 days, depending upon the cultivar and room temperature.