

FREESIAS

Justifiably one of the most popular flowers, the sweet fragrance of freesias is a part of every spring. Unlike many other fragrant flowers, modern hybridising of freesias has retained their strong fragrance while giving us healthy growth, new colours and tall stems.

Freesias are available in single and double flowered forms in varying shades of red, pink, yellow, blue and white. Double flowered freesias have an extra set of petals, giving a more full, fancy appearance.

There is no difference in fragrance between the two types.



*Single Freesia
Bordeaux*



*Double Freesia
Starlight*

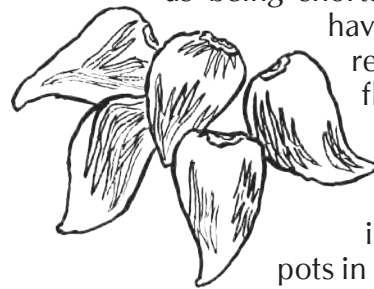
Just like gladioli, freesias are corms – the corm you plant will give up all its goodness to grow and flower and a completely new corm will form on top of the old one, together with a few small cormlets at its base.

PLANTING

Corms should be planted from February to May, 8 cm deep and in a sunny, free draining position. Early planting will allow the corms to establish, but will not result in particularly early flowering as soil temperatures must fall below 17°C before the corms will set flowers, and this does not happen until later in autumn.

Freesias are well suited to naturalising, establishing good clumps within a season or two. They require no special attention over time other than watering in dry conditions and some fertiliser once a year.

Freesias are also ideal for potting, and a new series of dwarf pot varieties has been developed. As well as being shorter growing, they don't



have the same strict cold requirements and can be flowering as little as 12 weeks after planting.

They do still need some cold, so it's important to put the pots in a cool shady place until the shoots are well up in early winter, or they may flower poorly.

Use a good quality mix and cover the bulbs with at least 5cm of it when planting. Re-plant in fresh mix each year.

AFTER PLANTING

There's little more to do after planting and watering in. In early spring as the shoots emerge, fertilise with a balanced N:P:K 15:10:10 fertiliser to give the plants a boost.

AFTER FLOWERING

To ensure good flowering next year, make sure you keep looking after the bulbs after flowering. Now is the time to fertilise them again to boost growth and help them re-gain strength. Keep watering so the leaves remain green as long as possible. The longer they remain green, the more growth the bulb will make.

If you want to lift the corms to move them or split up large clumps, this should be done in December/January when the corms are dormant.

After harvest, dry them off and store them in a warm airy place until planting again in autumn.