

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, red and white. Double flowered freesias generally have an extra, smaller set of petals in the centre of the flower, although recent hybrids are very fully double with large inner and outer petals. There is no difference in fragrance between the two types.

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.

Corms should be planted from February to May, 12 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.



*Double Freesia
Blue Bayou*



*Double Freesia
Virginia*



*Single Freesia
Santorini*



*Single Freesia
Pink Devotion*



Freesias are well suited to naturalising, establishing good clumps within a season or two. They require no special attention other than watering in dry conditions. 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.

Freesias are also ideal for potting, you can bring them close by the house or indoors to enjoy the fragrance when they start flowering. If you do plant them in pots, remember that like all spring bulbs they need a winter cool period to flower well. Pots warm up quickly in the sun, even in winter, 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.