

Yeovil Allotments Association

Birth Flowers for

August

Poppy & Gladiolus

Composited off the Internet

by

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Poppy

Varieties of Poppy

Poppies dance in the breeze with an almost ethereal charm. They symbolise dreams, imagination, and remembrance—a flower that carries both visual beauty and heartfelt meaning. From the fiery red poppies of remembrance to the soft, papery petals of Icelandic or oriental varieties, these blooms are as diverse as they are beautiful. We love it for garden design work because it has a **classic cottage garden appeal** – perfect for informal, wildlife-friendly spaces. Bees and butterflies can't resist their nectar-rich centers. There are several varieties of poppies to choose from, however, in my experience they are all just about finished flowering by August. We just had a few Welsh poppies left in the garden at the beginning of August, so I'm not sure why they qualify as August birth flowers, however, that doesn't mean I don't love them!

1. The Iconic Field Poppy (*Papaver rhoeas*)



The traditional remembrance poppy, with silky scarlet petals and a black heart. Scatter seed in autumn or spring for effortless swathes of colour. Loves poor, well-drained soil and full sun. This poppy is best for naturalistic planting, meadows and informal planting schemes.

2. Oriental Poppies (*Papaver orientale*)



Known for huge, crepe-paper blooms in shades from flaming orange to deep plum. Favourites include 'Patty's Plum' and 'Royal Wedding'. They die back after flowering but return stronger each year. These look great in cottage gardens, mixed borders and work

well as cut flowers. They can grow to just under a metre in height so best placed in the middle of a mixed border.

3. Iceland Poppies (*Papaver nudicaule*)



Smaller than the oriental poppy, fragrant, pastel blooms in lemon, coral, white, and soft pink, the Iceland poppies are short-lived perennials. I treat them as annuals. Great for cutting

—pick when buds just begin to open – containers, spring bedding and early colour in an informal scheme.

4. Himalayan Blue Poppy (*Meconopsis betonicifolia*)



A rare treat—large, sky-blue petals with a golden centre, this is one I can't grow because it prefers cool, moist, acidic soil and dappled shade. I can't provide that but when I see it in other

gardens it's breathtakingly beautiful. Well done if you succeed in growing this little beauty!

5. California Poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*)



Cheerful, silky cups in orange, gold, or creamy white. Self-seeds generously, thrives on neglect, and flowers for months in sunny, well-drained sites. This is the one poppy I have found to be one of the reliable August birth flowers that actually will flower in the month

of my birth! It's great in dry borders, gravel gardens and needs no maintenance. And costs just the price of a packet of seeds.

6. Welsh Poppy (*Meconopsis cambrica*)



Bright yellow or orange blooms that dance in the breeze, this is my favourite go-to plant for a tricky spot. Unlike the Californian poppy, which likes sunnier climes, the Welsh poppy tolerates

shade and moist soil and is much less... hmmm brash. It tends to pop up wherever it likes in my garden, which I'm quite happy with because I love naturalised planting.

Growing Tips for Poppies

1. **Sow from seed**—many poppies resent transplanting, so sow direct where they're to flower.
2. **Choose the right site**—full sun for annuals and Orientals, partial shade for Meconopsis types.
3. **Encourage self-seeding**—leave some seed heads to ripen for a naturalised look.
4. **Deadhead for repeat flowers**—especially in Iceland and California poppies.

Annual poppies self-seed freely, while perennial types offer reliable returns year after year.

Gladiolus

Gladiolus – The Sword Lily with Striking Presence

Standing tall and proud, the gladiolus earns its name from the Latin gladius, meaning “sword.” The towering stems, which can reach over a metre tall, are often lined with ruffled blooms in colours ranging from fiery crimson to soft lavender. Gladiolus symbolises strength, integrity, sincerity, and remembrance of victories so if this sounds significant to you, these would be your perfect choice of August birth flowers.

Varieties of Gladiolus

1. Grandiflora Gladiolus – The Classic Showstopper

These gladiolus are the larger, more showy varieties, if you want drama in your garden they are definitely going to give that. I saw some recently at **Miserden gardens in Gloucestershire**, planted with dahlias they made a big, bold border statements.



These are the gladiolus most people picture—tall, formal spikes with densely packed, showy blooms in every colour imaginable. They thrive in sunny, sheltered spots and are ideal for flower arranging. Popular varieties in the UK include:

- **‘Plum Tart’** – Rich magenta petals with subtle veining.



‘Green Star’ – Unusual pale green flowers for striking arrangements.



'Priscilla' – Creamy white with rose-pink edges, a cottage garden favourite.



2. The
Nanus
types of
Gladioli

Nanus, also known as dwarf or “butterfly” gladioli are prized for their compact stature (around 60–70 cm tall) and loose, open blooms, which often resemble butterflies in flight. They offer vibrant colour without the need for staking (which the grandiflora varieties often require) making them perfect for borders, containers, and pollinator-friendly planting schemes. They’re relatively easy to grow if you follow a few seasonal care tips (see below.)

3. *Gladiolus murielae*



My favourite of the August birth flowers (by a long way!) This is not a specific variety but rather a species within the gladiolus genus. It used to be called *Acianthera murielae* but is probably easier to remember by its common names such as the Abyssinian gladiolus or Peacock Orchid. I have this growing in August outside the front

on my house in containers. I find it works well with hostas because it's so elegant but the best bit of this distinctive plant is its beautiful fragrance, that fills my front garden as the sun falls.

Care tips for Gladioli

In most UK regions, gladiolus corms are not fully hardy, but they can be overwintered by digging up the corms in October, after foliage has yellowed. Shake off the soil, trim the foliage, and dry in a frost-free, airy space for 2 weeks before storing in paper bags or mesh sacks in a cool, dark, frost-free place until spring. Sadly this did not work for my Murielae Gladiolus, so I treat them as a annual, call it 'birthday present.'

Designing with August's Birth Flowers

When planning a garden with August blooms in mind, think contrast and harmony:

- Pair tall gladiolus spires at the back of borders with drifts of poppies in front for layered colour and texture.
- Create a "birthday border" for an August-born loved one, using these flowers alongside other summer favourites like dahlias, sunflowers, and verbena bonariensis.
- Use poppy seed heads and dried gladiolus stalks for autumn and winter arrangements, extending their impact beyond the growing season.

Bring August into Your Garden

Whether you're celebrating your own birthday or gifting a friend, August's birth flowers offer more than just seasonal colour—they bring meaning, history, and personality to your outdoor space.