

# **GLADIOLAS**

By Steve Wessels

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Dedicated to my father

Have you ever grown gladiolas?  
And watched as the tall stalks quickly grew  
And put on their glory?  
Then let them wither and die, only to  
Sprout up next year and again reach for the sky?

But have you watched what happens the next year?  
A number of small shoots spring up alongside, but put on  
Few flowers... and the parent bulb is spindly...

The parent, when fully grown and flowered,  
Gives birth to the new crop of children.  
But unless the children are carefully dug up,  
Their roots carefully pulled apart from the parent, and  
Planted into their own ground, with  
Sufficient space and light and water and nourishment,  
The children, like the parent, become weak and spindly.

The Master Gardner has so designed the gladiola, and us.  
Wise parents slowly, carefully, tenderly, unwrap the  
Physical and emotional tentacles that are tightly wrapped around us  
By our children, preparing them to be  
Transplanted into their own space, in the proper time,  
So they may flourish on their own, to grow to their  
Full potential in Christ Jesus.  
Parents dare not hold on too tightly, lest  
Both we and our children become weak and spindly,  
Unable to reach our full potential.

Yes, there will be disease, insects, winds, drought,  
And other people that may damage our precious offspring  
Yes, they may still crave nourishment... and need water.  
Tender care by wise parents will result in knowing when to  
Withhold the water, that the child's roots may reach down  
To the alternative source, the Living Water underneath,  
to form strong roots and reaches the nutrients,  
That can withstand their own storm winds and time,  
To become strong enough support their own flowers and bulbs.

A kind word. A tender hug. An open door. The freedom  
To choose, to seek, to grow, to risk and suffer.

Wise parents prepare their children, giving them  
More freedom as they undertake more responsibility,  
more space and nourishment and light  
To be themselves,  
To be all that the Creator has designed them to be.