

Growing Beautiful Mums



“**ChrysantheMUMS**” are some of the most colorful plants in the fall garden. Their rich colors compliment the changing foliage in the landscape and their flowers are long-lasting and sturdy. They can be used in borders or as a grouping to create a welcome sight when other blooming plants are fading. We don't consider Mums to be perennials, but if you follow these tips and if the winter is a mild one, your Mums may very well return next year.

LOCATION: Choose a rich, well-drained soil with 4 or more hours of sunlight. More sun, more blooms.

PLANTING: Dig a hole at least 1 1/2 times the size of plant. Place *Grandma's Planting Mix* in the hole and work it well into the soil you removed also. Place Mum in hole so top of its root system is at soil level, no deeper. Add remaining mix of existing soil and *Grandma's Mix*. Tamp down lightly. Water well.

PROMOTING FALL REBLOOMING: After the first blooms fade, pinch off or prune just the spent flowers and feed every week with *Miracle Gro* fertilizer in your watering can. New blooms open 3 to 4 weeks after pruning. The second and third sets of blooms will never be as abundant as the first, but they provide welcome color in late fall.

WATERING: Newly set plants require watering at least twice weekly, more if the weather is hot or windy. Once they are established, water as needed to keep soil moist. Plants should never be allowed to dry out thoroughly. Mums, like all plants, should not go into the winter with dry roots or they will likely not return in the spring. Water until the first hard freeze and occasionally throughout the winter if there is little snow.

SPRING CARE: Remove winter mulch in March. Clean away any debris to allow for new growth. Keep plants pruned back to 6 to 8 inches tall until the 4th of July. This pruning is crucial for more compact plants with lots of blooms rather than tall spindly plants that bloom too early.

FERTILIZING: Feed in spring, summer and early fall with *Plant-tone* all-purpose organic fertilizer by Espoma. As a bloom builder, add *Miracle Gro* to your watering can several times in spring and summer to maximize flower production.

MOST COMMON MISTAKES: Planting in too much shade; inadequate moisture year-round, not just during the blooming season; failure to prune; inadequate fertilizer.



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