



Chrysanthemums

How to get great mums without a lot of work.

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Choose your planting site

- Mums grow best when planted in full sun.
- Mums' small, shallow roots can't compete with larger roots, so don't plant them too close to trees or shrubs.
- Make sure the planting site has good water drainage.

Prepare the soil

- Mums will grow in just about any soil. Before you plant, dig in plenty of organic matter such as composted manure or garden compost around the area where you will plant your mums.
- Mums need a lot of nitrogen. You can provide the needed nitrogen and other nutrients by using a balanced fertilizer (10-10-10) sprinkled over the roots of the plant or by using a generous amount of organic fertilizer (garden compost or manure). Carefully follow fertilizer label directions in order to prevent over-feeding the plant and causing fertilizer run-off.

Choose your plants carefully

Plants that go in the ground healthy require less care (and time) in the long run. When you are looking at plants to buy, make sure you get plants without diseases or insects. How will you know if there are diseases or insects? Look at the leaves for signs of disease (spotted or wilted leaves) and signs of insect damage (holes, strangely shaped leaves, or winding trails inside the leaves). Also look

at the flowers, if many of them are lopsided then there are either insects on the plant now or there were insects at one time.

Plant your mums

- Remove the plant from the pot and check if the roots are wound around the inside of the pot. If they are wound around then the plant is root bound and you should make a few cuts to break up the root ball or rough up the root ball with your hands to tease out some of the roots.
- Space your mums 18 to 24 inches apart.
- Plant the mums in the ground at the same depth as they were grown in the pot. Do not put soil on top of the existing root ball.

Care for your plants as they grow

- Mulch the mums with about 2 inches of organic mulch, but not grass clippings. Mulch the root area of the plant but try to keep the mulch from touching the plant stems. Why should you mulch? Because mulching cuts down on the amount of watering you need to do, controls weeds, and makes the garden look nice.
- Water the plants for the first few weeks following planting. Water the plants slowly and deeply to avoid a shallow watering which will not do the plant as much good. Watch how dry the soil is because mum roots are shallow and the plants may dry up quickly.
- Look for insects and diseases, usually treat diseases and insects by removing infected leaves and destroying them.
- **Remember**, healthy plants are less likely to get very bad disease or insect problems.

Enjoy the beautiful blooms!

Overwintering your mums

If you want to keep your mums over the winter for next year then prepare the plants for the long cold period ahead by:

- Making sure there is good drainage of water away from the roots. If the roots stay wet then they will probably freeze and die before spring. If you chose your planting site well to begin with, you are already on your way to successfully overwintering your mums.
- Cutting the plant back to 2-3 inches high once the ground has become frozen.
- Putting a layer of mulch (such as evergreen boughs, shredded leaves, or straw) over the tops of the plants.

Note

Although mums are perennials, if they are planted late in the growing season (mid-September) then they might not get enough time to grow roots deep enough to overwinter successfully.

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