



Bucks Country Gardens

Chrysanthemums

Versatility is one of the chrysanthemums most outstanding characteristics – they provide a variety of colors and offer an assortment of flower forms. Some varieties bloom as early as August and continue into late fall until frost. Colors include white and many shades of yellow, pink, lavender, red and bronze – some may even combine more than one color!

The various bloom types of hardy chrysanthemums are classified by the National Chrysanthemum Society as follows: Pompon, Button, Decorative and Single-flowered. Six other bloom types are Spoon-flowered, Quill-flowered, Anemone-flowered, Spider, Exhibition and Cascade Chrysanthemums – all of these require special protection and are not recommended for your perennial gardens.

Mums are the plants for fall color – just as poinsettias are the plants for the Christmas season. Flowering garden mums purchased in the spring can be enjoyed and then planted outside. They will grow through the summer and flower again in the fall. They may also be enjoyed year after year as a perennial (weather permitting).

PLANTING GUIDELINES

1. Plant your chrysanthemums as early as possible to get the root system established before cold weather sets in.
2. All mums do best in full sun, and all – especially hardy chrysanthemums – need soil that has been thoroughly cultivated and enriched with organic material (such as compost, leaf mold, or composted manure). Space plants 12-24 inches apart, depending on the size of the variety.
3. Apply liberal amounts of 5-10-10 fertilizer into the soil before planting. Mums require ample amounts of water during the growing season and good drainage while they remain dormant in winter.
4. Garden mums are hardy plants – but if planted too late they may freeze and eventually die. To provide winter protection, trim the frost-damaged stems to the ground and cover with 3-6 inches of soil or shredded bark. (This should be removed in early spring if it hasn't already been worm away naturally).
5. To propagate new plants, divide every 1-2 years in the spring when the shoots are 2-4 inches tall. Only one stem (with attached stolon) is needed to make a full-sized plant by fall. If more plants are needed, take cuttings in late spring from the new plants started from the freshly planted divisions. The stem cuttings will root readily.

Hardy chrysanthemums lose their vigor after one year of flowering, producing smaller and fewer blooms, so discard the old, woody clumps after you have transplanted your new divisions.