



TIP SHEET

3038 Ewings Road • Newfane, NY 14108
(716) 778-0026 • Fax (716) 778-9711
www.heimillergreenhouses.com

Care for your Garden Mums

Florist mums and Garden mums come from the same original parent -- a golden-yellow daisy mum from China. Today's hybrids in both categories are the results of endless crosses between several species from China and Japan. The result of such hybridization performed over hundreds of years is different types of mums that were bred for two distinct purposes.



Florist mums, sometimes called pot mums, are large-flower plants with many possible bloom forms. Grown in greenhouses and used only as indoor plants, Florist mums produce few, if any, underground stolens, which are necessary if the mum is to survive cold weather. Florist mums planted outside are most likely being used as short-term bedding plants that will be removed when the blooms are spent. You can plant a potted florist mum you receive as a gift, and it may grow for the summer, but it will not survive the winter, no matter how much protection you give it.

Garden mums, on the other hand, produce underground stolens and can survive cold better. Previously called Hardy Mums, the term "hardy" has been abandoned by most growers since hardiness of garden mum cultivars may vary significantly from one season or area depending on weather and previous cultural conditions. Garden mums are genetically capable of surviving the winter, as opposed to Florist mums. However, they can still die if they aren't given the proper care, maintenance and winter preparations. You can increase the survival rate of fall-planted garden mums by following these steps:

1. Fall mums prefer to be planted in an area that receives full sun, but most cultivars can get by with a half day of direct sunshine. For ultimate growth, plant your new fall mums in fertile well drained soil. Plant as early as possible to ensure time for the plant to establish itself before the first hard freeze.



TIP SHEET

3038 Ewings Road • Newfane, NY 14108
(716) 778-0026 • Fax (716) 778-9711
www.heimillergreenhouses.com

Care for your Garden Mums - continued

2. Fall mums should never be allowed to wilt... especially newly transplanted plants. Check your fall mums every couple of days for watering until you become familiar with their needs, particularly during dry spells. Be sure to thoroughly water-in your new transplants. Newly planted fall mums will not require any fertilizer this season.
3. After several hard frosts have blackened the plants (the plant should look dead), cut them back to near soil level.
4. Once you've cut back your mums mulch them heavily to help ensure their return the following spring. A good foot or two of dried leaves makes good mulch, you could also use pine bark or grass clippings. During a mild winter the purpose of mulching your fall mums is to keep the soil from freezing. During a hard winter the purpose is to keep the ground frozen. It is the repetitive freeze thaw cycle which heaves your Garden Mum out of the soil and kills its roots.
5. Remove the mulch once all of the frost is out of the ground. In our area this is usually around April 15th.
6. Once your mums start re-growing you can feed them regularly with your favorite plant food until August 15th or when buds are pea sized. The halt in feeding will signal that it's time to bloom and prepare for winter, which is necessary for the healthy life cycle of the plants.
7. Young spring plants will need pinching for maximum bloom and best plant shape. Start pinching as soon as the plant is 3-4" tall. Pinch about half of the tender new growth at the top of each branch or shoot. Repeat the process with every 3 to 4 inches of growth (about every two to four weeks) until July 4th. Stopping then ensures you will get good bud formation and blooms in fall.



TIP SHEET

3038 Ewings Road • Newfane, NY 14108
(716) 778-0026 • Fax (716) 778-9711
www.heimillergreenhouses.com

Care for your Garden Mums - continued

8. Fall Mums should be divided every couple of years. Divide in the spring after the last hard frost and after you see new growth starting. Dig up the plant in one piece and separate outer pieces from the center with a clean sharp spade or large knife. Replant the outer portions into a rejuvenated bed, and discard the original center of the plant.

There are varieties of perennial chrysanthemums. You will not find the perennial chrysanthemums for sale with the fall garden mums. Nurseries generally place them with perennials. We are growing two varieties of perennial mums which will be available this coming spring. If they are well received we will probably add more varieties in future seasons.