

Latin Name/Genus: *Chrysanthemum spp.*

Family: *Asteraceae*

Difficulty: Easy

Season: Warm Season

Exposure: Full-sun preferred (partial shade in hotter climates)

Zone: Hardy as perennial to Zone 5



Timing: Begin Garden [Chrysanthemum]mum seeds indoors 6-8 weeks prior to last frost, hardening off the plant prior to transplanting outdoors as soon as the soil warms in spring and the threat of frost is gone. For fall-planted Garden Mums to have a better chance of survival over winter, provide roots and crown additional protection by leaving the foliage on the plant until spring (avoid pruning entirely), and mulching the base heavily (ie. 10-15cm or 4-6" of mulch), or pot the plant to move to a more protected area for winter prior to the first hard freeze. Planting Garden Mums in late summer/early fall doesn't guarantee the plant will be established enough to make it through winters with sub-zero temperatures; repeated freezing and thawing of soil can also be detrimental to the plant.

Starting: Plant Garden Mums somewhere there is morning or daytime light (versus evening light), as they set buds in response to day length and can be easier manipulated. Potted Garden Mums tend to be completely rootbound by the time they are purchased, so repotting is recommended, using a slightly larger pot, detangling but not damaging the roots, tamping down the soil gently, and ensuring the surface of the potted soil is 2.5cm (1") below the lip of the new pot – water well.

Growing: Garden Mums prefer a slightly acidic pH between 6.5-6.7, and tend to thrive in rich, moist, well-drained soil; keep well watered (extra once budding begins), but avoid soggy roots in potted Garden Mums. When Mums are 15-20cm (6-8") high, pinch back centre leaves with your fingertips to remove tiny new leaves, boosting new growth – repeat with every 15cm of growth; never prune buds. Deadhead flowers regularly to encourage a longer flowering period. Keep mums away from dogs, cats, and horses, as they are toxic to these common animals.

Nutrient Preferences: It is recommended Garden Mums be regularly fertilized throughout the growing season for optimal blooming. Mums appreciate regular feedings of nitrogen and potassium during their vegetative phase (prior to blooming, once all danger of frost has passed); established plants should not be fertilized after July.

Blooms: Once the foliage dies (after the first frost) from your Garden Mums, cut the plant down to approximately 15cm (6") and cover with several centimetres of straw/mulch to protect them over winter; lift and divide established plants every 2-3 years. In warmer climates, evening heat can cause Garden Mums to flower later, and can cause misshapen flower buds, erratic flowering patterns, deformed plant crown, etc. – seek different varieties with a higher heat tolerance to avoid issues related to heat delay.



Garden Mums *Plant Care Information*

Disease & Pests: Soggy soil can cause root rot in [potted] Garden Mum roots. In humid locations, ensure Garden Mums have enough good air circulation to prevent rot, fungal infections, viruses (ie. Chrysanthemum smut) or disease (ie. botrytis, leaf spots, rust, powdery mildew, verticillium wilt, aster yellows) – if dealing with suspected disease or virus, remove/destroy that section of the plant, or the whole plant, if necessary. Mums can also suffer damage from aphids, thrips, spider mites, earwigs and leaf miners – telltale signs include leaf and stem damage, webbing on plants, and visible insects; blast off pests with water, or insecticidal soap spray. Pick off any slugs or snails.

Companion Planting: Garden Mums grow well with other flowers such as those in the dianthus family (ie. Carnations), other cultivars of Mums, Coneflowers, Lamium, Eupatorium Maculatum (Joe-Pye Weed), roses, Heuchera, Sedum, Alyssum, and ornamental cabbage and kale, as well as most vegetable plants. Some cultivars produce natural chemicals that kill harmful soil nematodes and repel common damaging insect pests (ie. White-blooming Mums repel Japanese beetles) so are terrific near your food garden.