

HARDY CHRYSANTHEMUMS



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EXTENSION SERVICE

**NORTH DAKOTA AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE AND U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COOPERATING**

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Hardy Chrysanthemums

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Varieties of chrysanthemums now available are considerably hardier than those available a few years ago. Growers find, though, that the degree of hardiness is somewhat variable.

Garden chrysanthemums are easy to grow. They will get along even with considerable neglect. But you will get a lot better results if you give them good care.

For an abundance of bloom cultivate to keep down weeds, grow in full sunlight and in fertile soil, give plenty of water during summer months and provide winter protection.

Chrysanthemums will give you bright splashes of color in autumn. They are excellent for cutting.

Culture and Care

Plant in full sun. Avoid any location shaded by buildings, large shrubs or trees for more than 1/3 of each day.

Any good garden soil that will grow other flowers or vegetables should also grow mums very well. Some type of organic matter, such as rotted barnyard manure worked into the soil before planting, will help. Two tablespoonfuls of 4-12-4 fertilizer per plant can be applied two or three times during the summer and worked into the soil. Be sure to water-in this fertilizer after application. *Do not apply fertilizer when soil is dry without watering it in. This fertilizer should first be applied to the growing plants about August 1.*

When and Where to Plant

Grow your hardy mums in the border, about the foundation of the house, or in the formal garden. Spring is the preferred time for planting. Do not plant too early in the spring but try to be sure all the hard, ice-forming frosts are past before you set your mums. Usually in North Dakota this is from May 1 to about June 10.

*Eric Sochting of Valley City gave many helpful suggestions during the preparation of this circular.

In dividing an old clump, always use the healthy, vigorous shoots from the outside of the clump. Do not use the old, central crown.

Watering

Do not water chrysanthemums from above with a sprinkler. It is better to lay the hose on the ground near the plant and let the water run slowly until the ground is well soaked. In mass plantings, a soil soaker type of hose is very satisfactory. Such a hose will water the plants with the least waste of water. A thorough watering once a week is much better than two light waterings. Remember not to sprinkle the plants from overhead since this might encourage foliage diseases.

Pinching Back

To have low-growing, sturdy, well-branched plants, it is advisable to pinch back the end shoots one or two times during the season. You can do this easily with your thumb and forefinger.

Remove about 1/2 inch of the soft growing tip of the main shoots. Pinch them back first when the plants are about 6 inches tall. The plants will then produce side branches. When these side branches are about 8 inches long, pinch out their tips to cause more side branching. It is not advisable to pinch the plants after August 1 as the plants then are likely to be forming buds.

Some gardeners do not pinch back early blooming varieties after the middle of July. A plant properly pinched back will be sturdy and will not need any support to hold it erect.

Blooming Time

Garden chrysanthemums are generally considered fall blooming plants. Many of the later ones are caught before they get a chance to bloom in years of early frosts. But some earlier varieties may bloom in June and continue to bloom off and on until frost. Some varieties, too, resist frost better than others and will bloom after several frosts with apparent little damage to the plant.

Generally, however, you should look on the chrysanthemum as a flower to give color to your plantings during the fall when many other ornamentals are through.

Winter Care

Most losses with chrysanthemums come in early spring. Losses are probably due not so much to lack of winter hardiness as they are to the freezing and thawing which occurs during the years when there is little snow covering over the chrysanthemum beds.

Provide some sort of winter protection in North Dakota. A mulch of slough grass or coarse wheat straw is satisfactory but is messy. One commercial nursery recommends batts of rock wool, the same material as is used in insulating houses. Another gardener suggests transplanting mums from the border into a cold frame in the fall. He then covers the cold frame with a blanket or an old rug. Leaves should not be used except as a last resort. Wet leaves tend to become soggy and pack too tightly. They then have a tendency to smother the plants.

Varieties

Varieties are so numerous as to become confusing. A few that appear to be best suited to this northern climate are listed here. Try a few of these. After you learn to handle them successfully, go on from there.

Blooming dates can only be approximate. August 15 is an average early date; September 15 is a mid-season date; October 15th is late. Some early varieties may under certain conditions bloom much earlier than indicated.

VARIETY	COLOR	TYPE OF FLOWER	BLOOMING TIME
Autumnsong	Wine-rose	Double	Midseason
Butterball	Butter-yellow	Double	Early
Candlelight	Ivory-white	Double	Medium-early
Chippewa	Purple	Double	Early midseason
Dean Kay	Rose-pink	Semi-double	Midseason
Early Harvest	Orange	Double	Early midseason
Glowing Coals	Red	Double	Midseason
Harbinger	Bronze	Double	Early
Heatherbloom	Pink center-gold tips	Double	Early midseason
Maroon and Gold	Maroon and Gold	Double	Early