

CHRIS' CORNER



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GARDEN CHRYSANTHEMUMS

October is here which means cooler temperatures are not that far behind. It's a lot easier to work out in the garden when the weather is cooler! Passing by several of the big box stores here recently I noticed they had a large supply of chrysanthemums. Nothing says fall like the colors of mums!

Chrysanthemums come in a number of colors and flower forms with little to minimum care. Their color will usually last until the first frost. Although mums can be planted in the spring or fall, spring plantings are more likely to survive our winters. If you are going to plant in the fall, do so at least six to eight weeks before a killing frost so that the plant can become established.

Plant mums in an area with full sun. Mums that are planted in shade will tend to get leggy and will not flower all that well. They prefer moist soils, but good drainage is a must. Before planting incorporate 2 to 4 inches of organic matter to build up the soil in that site. They will need to be well-watered throughout the season. There is no need to fertilize fall-planted mums.

If you would like to increase the chances that your mums will survive the winter here are a few things to consider:

- Don't fertilize mums after the end of July
- Select early-flowering cultivars that ideal for this area
- Don't prune the plants back in the fall
- Applying 2-4 inches of mulch is the best insurance for overwintering mums

The good thing about mums is that they are available in a number of different colors. Yellow must be the most popular color because I see more of it than any other color. When shopping for mums for my fall display, I look for plants that have a lot of blooms that are not fully open. They tend to last and look a bit better in appearance. This is usually the time when I get my straw bales, mums and pumpkins for my fall display. My son looks forward to helping me with this project every year!

Until next time, happy fall!



Christopher Cooper

