

## Mum Care Basics

Follow our tips and guidelines for healthy, beautiful mums year after year.

### About

A common question we get asked is if mums are annuals or perennials. The answer is both. There are many varieties of mums, and some are hardier than others. The varieties we grow are hardy perennials, but there is no guarantee that they will come back the next year. It all depends on when and where you plant them and how you care for them. Follow these guidelines to help keep your mum looking and growing its best.

Another common question is how long will my mum bloom. Depending on weather conditions and mum varieties, you can expect to get a good display of color for four to six weeks after the buds begin to break open. Different mum varieties will begin to flower at different times due to their response to day length. Extended periods of hot weather will age them quickly. When kept in a shaded spot, they may not open properly. So if placing your mum in the shade, purchase one with flowers that are more open.

### Care for Potted Mums

Our mums are grown in 9" or 12" pots. Many customers choose to leave them in our pots. It is imperative to check the moisture daily and water them when the top 1" of soil is dry. This will vary widely depending on the temperature, location, and other factors. The hotter and drier the weather is, the more you will need to water it. If the leaves begin to wilt, there is a watering problem. If the soil is dry and the mum is wilting, you need to water it thoroughly. However, if it is wilting and the top of the soil is wet, then you may be overwatering it. During wet, rainy weather, cut back your watering to every other day, especially if it feels wet. If you choose to repot your mum, choose a pot slightly larger than the original and add soil to the bottom of it before placing the mum in it. Water the pot until water flows out the bottom of it. Another way to extend the life of your bloom time is deadheading. When some blooms begin to brown, just pluck them off to make room for additional buds. This will allow light and room for them to break open.

### Planting Fall Mums

Most mums are planted too late in the fall for the plants to survive over the winter. Some may come back the next year if properly mulched and cared for throughout the fall. For them to survive the winter, they need to be established in the ground long before cold weather hits. It can be helpful to plant them before they are showing much color, so they can put energy towards establishing their root system instead of flowering. When choosing a location to plant your mums, consider a place that is somewhat protected from the winter winds that could decrease their chances of surviving the winter. They are sun-loving plants, so make sure they get at least 6 hours of sun. The more sun they receive will result in more growth, bloom, and hardiness. Be sure to space your mums at least 3 feet apart, since they can grow larger each year. When planting, work your soil to a depth of at least 10". Depending on your soil, add some organic matter. Once planted, water thoroughly. Mums do not like to be dry. Soil should remain moist, but not soggy. Once the ground cools, stop watering your mums. Cover the soil with 2 or 3 inches of mulch. Leave the foliage on until spring, as it will further protect the mum for the winter. Clean up the dead foliage in the spring. Next spring, it is important to provide nitrogen and potassium during their vegetative phase. Start your feeding cycle in April or May and continue until early July. As mums grow, some varieties tend to get tall and leggy. If you desire a compact plant that blooms in the fall, it may be a good idea to prune or pinch back the mums every 2-3 weeks throughout the summer until early July. Every 3-4 years mums may also benefit from dividing. This will keep them full and round. Spring is the best time to divide mums.

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to us and we will do our best to help!

