

Acknowledgements

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Chrysanthemums



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Classification

Kingdom:	Plantae
Family:	Asteraceae
Genus:	Dendratherma* grandiflora
Common name:	Mum
Origin:	China
Distribution:	The Netherlands, Japan

TEMPERATURE AND SOIL REQUIREMENTS

Temperature

In general, chrysanthemums develop best where they receive full sunlight all day. When they are grown under shade the plants tend to grow taller, have weaker stems and smaller flowers, and bloom later in the fall. Most cultivars are short-day plants, which require short days or long nights to flower. Under long-day conditions, mums tend to remain vegetative and they naturally flower in autumn and winter.

In most areas, five to six hours of sunlight will be enough to produce a healthy plant. The critical day length is 14 to 15 hours for flower initiation and 13 to 14 hours for development. Night temperatures of 15 °C to 20 °C during the early days of bud formation is highly desirable as the bud become visible. Cut mums do best at day temperatures of between 20 °C and 28 °C.

High temperatures may cause wilting of the plants, delay the production schedule, reduce floral quality, reduce summer-time productivity

and cause some buds not to open at all. Low temperatures during bud initiation and vegetal growth may delay flowering and budding and result in dwarf plants. Low night temperatures during the flowering period may lead to intense colour in pink and bronze-coloured cultivars while white cultivars turn pink. This variation in weather pattern may cause variations in the quantities of plant material available for the market.

Moisture

Mums require small volumes of water during the growth stages but it is of paramount importance to avoid water stress during vegetal growth. Water supply should be reduced as the plants approach the flowering stage.

Neither drought nor waterlogged conditions in the soil are suitable for mums as either may lead to stunted growth with small foliage. On the other hand, too little water may cause abnormal flower development during the flowers' development stage.

Soil requirements

Mums require well-drained, sandy loam of good texture and aeration because of their relatively shallow root system. Poorly drained soils may cause soil-borne diseases which may damage the plants during the wet summer periods.

For best growth, the soil should be neutral or slightly acidic with a pH of 6,5 to 7,0. Very light, sandy soils are not recommended because of their poor moisture-holding capacity.

IMPORTANCE AND USES

Human consumption

The Chinese believed that the plant has the power of life; boiled roots were used as a headache remedy, young sprouts and petals were eaten in salads, and the leaves were brewed for a festive drink. Chrysanthemum-flavoured tea is very popular and is used as a relaxant.

In the Far East, Feng Shui adherents believe that the mum brings laughter and happiness to your home. South African flowers, especially mums, are sold to Kenyan bouquet makers who sell them to the British supermarkets Sainsbury's and Tesco.

Traditional uses

Some countries (such as Malta) regard it as unlucky to bring the flower indoors. It is associated with funerals and All Saints' Day. In Germany, people put white mums in their homes at Christmas to welcome the Baby Jesus. The mum is depicted on Japan's imperial weapon and flag. Japan also has a national festival devoted to the flower (9 September). In South Africa, the flowers are used as wreaths at funerals.

Ornamental uses

Mums are very suitable for container gardening on patios. These plants bear flowers in a wide variety of colours. They are used as cut flowers for special occasions and for pot plants.