

HOME DECOR & MORE



Chrysanthemums not Exclusive to Fall

Chrysanthemums, often referred to as "mums," are among the most popular flowers for autumn plantings and landscape decor. But these hardy, often vividly colored plants are worthy of attention as early as the spring gardening season.

Although mums are most often purchased in September and October and cast aside shortly thereafter, the plant that many people mistake for an annual is actually a perennial — meaning with the

proper care it can come back year after year. By planting mums in the spring, gardeners ensure the plants have enough time to develop solid root systems, including their hallmark underground runners that enable them to grow tall and wide and over-winter.

While it's best to plant potted mums that were used in fall decorating after the flowers die and before winter sets in, some container plants can still thrive and come back the following year. When cleaning

gardens in the spring, do not trash withered mums that may have been stashed behind the shed. Try planting them and you may be surprised that they thrive and rebloom in the garden this year. Remove the dead branches and dried-up parts of the plant only after new shoots begin to grow.

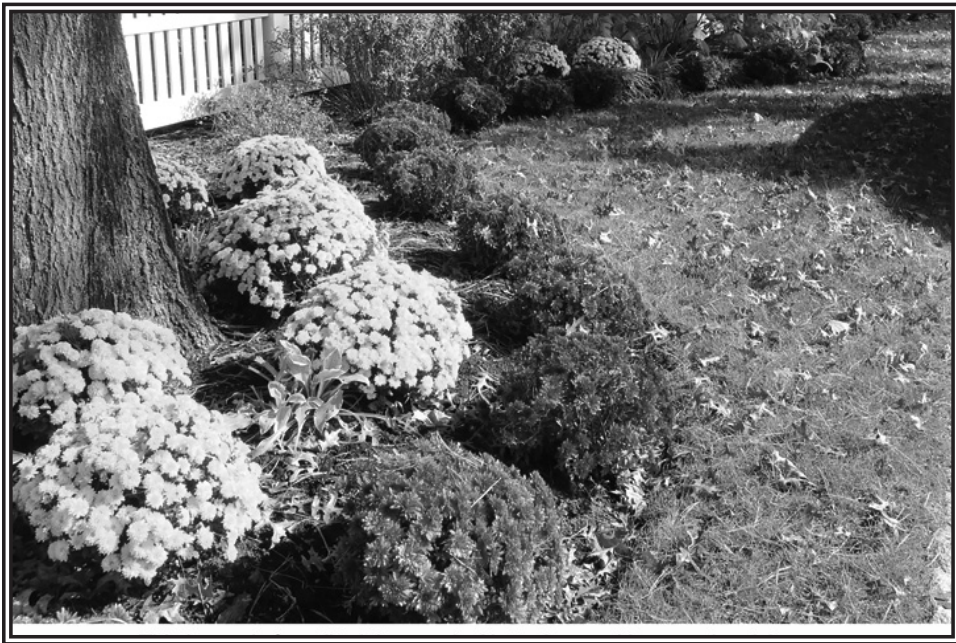
Gardening experts advise planting mums in sunny spots with southern exposure. However, be sure to keep the plants away from artificial

lighting, such as streetlamps or garden accent lighting, as mums are short-day plants that bloom only when the hours of darkness are greater than the hours of daylight. Mums that get too much light at night may not bloom to their fullest capacity, or they may be "leggy," with longer stems instead of being compact. Pruning or "pinching" mums in June and July will help keep mums compact as well, resulting in more flowers.

Mums desire a rich and moist but well-drained soil. Planted mums will require less water than container plants, but the ground should never become soggy. Well-watered plants will offer more flowers.

Hardy mums work well as edging, in mass groupings to create a shrub-like appearance and even in containers. Thanks to their relative affordability, mums are an inexpensive way to dress up landscapes. Mums are hardy in USDA zones five through nine.

Although fall-flowering mums may not be the first plants to come to gardeners' minds at the onset of spring, planning chrysanthemum landscaping now can help ensure beautiful plants when spring and summer flowers begin to wither.



Well known for bringing color to autumn landscapes, mums actually are a perennial that can be planted in spring to come back each year.

Home Décor - Helpful tips to save time and money

Submitted by Debbie Brown

Fall is a time for getting the home ready for winter. There are a lot of helpful tips that save time, money and help to spruce up the place.

Entryway - when finished using plastic place mats on the table, they may be used for muddy boots in the entryway. You may find they are the right size and easier to handle than a mat.

Pictures - For hanging small pictures rather than using wire, use clean dental floss. If the picture seems to tilt from side to side place masking tape on each side of the middle point of the wire or floss. A dab of hot glue at the bottom of the frame will keep the picture out from the wall and help to balance.

Message Board - An old cookie sheet covered with brightly colored Mac Tac or a color that coordinates with your décor can be used as a message board. Cover the cookie sheet and add colorful magnets. Also there is an

opportunity for themes, perhaps your backing is pictures of cats and the magnets are cats too.

Ice Cube Trays - Old ice cube trays have lots of uses: separating jewelry, rings, earrings etc., separating screws, mixing paints, and organizing craft supplies. These may come in handy for cleaning the junk drawer.

Extra Space - Use the drawers from plastic storage units for under the bed. These can be especially useful for children's toys. They help to keep things organized and hidden too. Decorate with fun labels or their names.

Animal House - Find interesting window boxes or long plant hangers to hold stuffed animals and plush toys. Place on the wall so that the presentation is interesting to look at and also gives the stuffed toys a place off the floor.

Pot Lids - No place for the lids. If your pot lids have knobs, you can purchase towel racks (test the distance

between the wall of your cabinet door and towel rack to ensure the pot knob will hold the lid up) that keep the lids organized on a cabinet door.

Old Dresser, New Use - Use the dressers top drawer and take out the bottom drawers. Fit the bottom space with uniform square baskets that fit the space and give the item a new look. Baskets help to separate and organize the space below the drawers.

Kitchen Aid - Need a colander? Place holes in an aluminum pie plate. Also you can place silverware in the bottom of an aluminum pie plate, cover with baking soda and hot water. An easy way to shine the silver.

Soft Brushes - A few drops of fabric softener and warm water can keep your brushes ready for the next job. After painting, with (latex paint), wash the paint off and then dip and swish in the fabric softener solution. Dry with cloth.

Slim Vase - Those hard to reach areas can make clean-

ing difficult. Put a tablespoon of rice, a drop of dish soap and a quarter cup of water. Swish around, then dump out the mixture. Rinse.

Flower Power - Freshen up the faux flowers. Place in a paper bag with a quarter cup of salt. Close the bag at top and give it a few shakes to loosen the dust.

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