

# HOME & GARDEN

## Make room for hardy mums

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Recorder Columnist

In October the hillsides are filled with brilliant color, yet many gardens are gone by, and flowers are only a memory. But it doesn't have to be that way.

### BETWEEN THE ROWS

In September and October pots of floriferous chrysanthemum plants are for sale at every roadside stand. The blossoms range from strong deep reds, gold and russets to sunny yellows, subtle pinks and whites that can hold an array together.

The potted plants are not expensive, and the single plant you buy this fall will develop and give you as many as six plants in the spring. Before you know it, you'll be able to line your walks with these dependable plants and have gifts for your friends.

*Chrysanthemums make wonderful, long-lasting cut flowers, so they are as useful in the house as in the garden.*

If you buy potted chrysanthemums this fall, plant them where the soil is rich and the sun shines for at least six hours a day. Just dig a hole, knock the plant out of its pot and plant it, giving it a good watering. You won't have to do much except snip off the spent blooms and admire the new flowers that will open until heavy frost. When the winter starts to close in, cut the plant back and relax until the spring. Most chrysanthemums are very hardy and come through even a harsh winter without any trouble.

In the spring new growth begins, and you will find that your

single plant has enlarged considerably and can be divided. Since they do not bloom until very late in the season and require very heavy feeding during the summer, the easiest way to grow mums is in a nursery row in the vegetable or cutting garden.



Prepare your nursery plot by first testing the soil. Chrysanthemums require an almost neutral soil, and in our area this will probably mean adding lime. Then dig in lots of compost and rotted manure because they are heavy feeders.

Dig up last fall's single plant and divide it into four or six parts, much as you would a pie, and plant them in your sunny

nursery row. Water them well and keep them well watered during any dry spells.

Because they are such heavy feeders they will need periodic fertilizing during the summer. I give them a good watering with manure tea (rotted manure steeped in a few gallons of water) every week or two.

"Summer pruning" is also vital. The plant must be pinched back to encourage it to develop a vigorous, bushy shape. After three or four pairs of leaves have formed, the tip should be pinched back; side shoots will develop, and they should also be pinched back. This method of pruning should be continued until a month or so before blooming, mid-July for the early bloomers and early August for the late bloomers. After this time the plant will have a full attractive shape and can put its energy into setting buds.

There are thousands of types of chrysanthemums. The decorative mum is the most common, and it comes in many different colors and sizes. I have several that I am very fond of. One is a mauve pink that, amazingly enough, looks marvelous with a mainly orange-flowered tablecloth I use. I also have a deep red, which is flecked with gold in its heart, and a bright, happy yellow.

This fall I was given a spoon chrysanthemum, which is so named because its tubular petals open out at the end and could be said to resemble a spoon. The color is a mixture of yellow and orange and very beautiful.

Cushion mums tend to form clumps that are as wide as they are high, and they are very hardy.

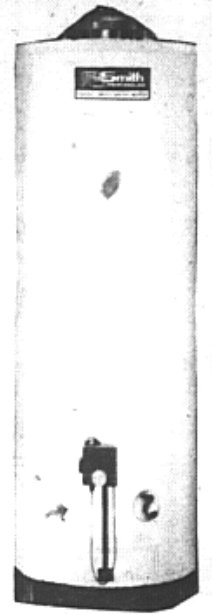
Pompoms are just what you would expect, large flowers that may be 4 inches across and quite spherical.

There are also single and double chrysanthemums that strongly resemble daisies.

Chrysanthemums make wonderful, long-lasting cut flowers, so they are as useful in the house as they are in the garden. Make room for them, and they will thrive and multiply, giving you more beauty every year.

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