

INCREASING CHANCES OR SURVIVAL THROUGH THE WINTER.

- 1) Water mums daily while they're blooming. The potted mums you buy in the fall dry out quickly since they are usually top heavy with bloom and have small amounts of roots. Keeping the soil moist will help plants stay healthy until you are ready to plant them.
- 2) Get mums out of their pots and into the ground soon after purchase. This gives the roots the maximum amount of time to become established before a hard freeze. If you prefer to display mums in the pots they came in, plant them promptly once their flower display is done.
- 3) Don't cut back the foliage of mums in the fall. The above-ground growth offers the plant an extra layer of winter protection. It also serves as a good reminder in the spring to search for any healthy new root growth under the ground. If you feel you 'must trim off something, remove the spent flowers only, but leave the rest of the plant alone.
- 4) Provide mums with a generous layer of light mulch as soon as the ground freezes. Mounding pine needles, straw or evergreens around the plant will help prevent the roots from heaving out of the ground during repeated freeze/thaw cycles. If using leaves, be sure they are shredded so they won't form a sodden mat over the plant.
- 5) Try to create a microclimate in which the plants will be protected from winter winds. A location on the south side of a building or other sheltered spot is ideal. You can also protect potted mums by buying a cold frame.
- 6) Continue watering mums ever after their blooms had faded to encourage new root growth. Keep in mind however, that mums demand good drainage. They will not survive the winter if planted in soggy soil.

Don't expect every single plant to make it through the winter. Overwintering potted mums planted at the end of the season is something of an experiment in cold climates. Your success rate will depend on your horticultural zone, planting site and the severity of any particular winter. Also keep in mind that even though a chrysanthemum plant is labeled "hardy", some varieties are undoubtedly more cold-resistant than others.