

Niagara College Greenhouse & Nursery Success Sheet No. 76

Extending the Life of Cut Chrysanthemums

Buying Cut Chrysanthemums

Chrysanthemums, or mums for short, make beautiful bouquets to brighten a home or special occasion. But not all mums are the same.

Mum quality can vary extensively. A good way to ensure that you're getting a good-quality bouquet is by buying local product. The colours are often brighter and the stems are stronger due to short shipping times and short periods without being in water. Local growers provide truer colours and better longevity.

Another key thing to look for when buying cut mums is how open the flowers are. A fresh bunch will have flowers that are still not fully opened. Also, the colour intensity is a good indicator of quality and freshness.

Taking Your Cut Mum Home

After you have purchased your mum bouquet, the first thing to do is to put it into a container, wrapper and all, with some cool water. Leave it like this for an hour or two. This allows some water to get back into the stems and gives the mums strength to stand on their own in the vase.

When it comes time to arrange your mums, first make a fresh cut on each stem. The cuts should be made with sharp scissors on a 45° angle. Also, remove any foliage that is under the water level in the vase to help keep the water from becoming contaminated by decaying leaves. Add a cut-flower

preservative containing sucrose, biocide and a pH adjuster. Doing this will extend the life of the mums.

Keeping Your Mums Fresh

A good way to keep your mums fresh is to change the water regularly. When changing the water, a good idea is to cut off a small piece of the stem to keep the tip from rotting. Add a small amount of bleach when the water is changed.

Choosing a Suitable Location

Cut mums last longer in cooler temperatures, so try to keep the flowers in a cool room where you can still enjoy them. If that's not possible, move the bouquet into a cooler room at least at night or when you're not enjoying the flowers.

Mums also don't like direct sunlight. Locations with lower light intensity will extend the shelf life of cut flowers and foliage.

Enjoying Excellent Value

Mums are very competitively priced and provide true value. Based on the duration of blooms and ease of care, they are an inexpensive way either to decorate or to bring a breath of spring into any home. Because of their low cost, just enjoy the blooms while they last; then compost them.

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