

Patty's Plants



September Newsletter 2010

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Mums Hardy Or Not?

I like to call fall mums, "Garden Mum" instead of "Hardy Mum". The reason I think we all know. They **may** decide to come back the following year and they **may not**. The later is what most people find happens.

This can be very frustrating, I know. In this newsletter I will give you some tips on growing Mums



and how you **may** get them to return for another colorful season. I will have some in soon but will have many more in 8", 10", 12". We have beautiful fall container gardens with mums and fall hanging baskets to revamp those sad looking summer planters. I will include "How to Choose Spring Bulbs for Fall Planting" as well as products that help to keep critters from eating your freshly plants bulbs.

Happy Fall Gardening

Summer Care Tips To Follow Next Year When Planting Mums

To encourage branching and development of compact bushy plants it is very important to pinch back your mums in the spring . When new growth has reached 6", pinch 2-3" off of every branch.

Whenever a branch grows another 5-6 inches repeat the pinching. Stop pinching the second week of July, this is when the plant will slow it's growth and start developing flower buds.

Happy Frog Soil Conditioner

Top dress perennials and mums with Happy Frog Soil Conditioner. You've heard me mention this before but it is really important to top dress or mulch your gardens in the fall when the ground begins to freeze. Freezing and thawing (heaving of the soil) will lift shallow rooted plants. Mums have a very shallow root system, this is why many of them don't survive the winter. This conditioner



will help to get your perennials and mums off to a good healthy start.

Hand-blended in small batches, Happy Frog Soil Conditioner contains forest humus, very fine bark, bat guano, and earth-worm castings. For an added boost to plant development, it also contains beneficial microbes and humic acid, both of which strengthen roots while aiding nutrient absorption. It comes in 3 cu ft bales for \$21.99

Planting Mums

Many of our gardens need freshening up this time of year. What better way to do it than with the beautiful colors of garden mums? Replace worn out annuals in your gardens or in your containers.

Chrysanthemum x morifolium come in many wonderful colors and flower type. Varieties such as: daisy like, pompon, cushion, buttons (small pompoms), decorative, spiders and spoon-petal are available. My favorites are the daisy types but the most popular are the cushion. The best time to plant mums is actually in the spring. But in spring you may not find as many colors and they will be only available in a 4.5" pot size. By planting in the spring, their roots will have time to grow and get established.

Planting– Mum should be planted in full sun. A good 5-6 hours is perfect. Find an area that has good drainage as

it is very important for their survival over winter. Mums have a very shallow root system so they prefer to be somewhat moist but not soggy soil. A good rich, fertile soil high in organic material is also helpful. We carry really good Fox Farm planting mix to use just for helping your mums live through the winter.

Mulching– Is a must when planting here in our climate this fall. When our ground freezes and thaws in the winter, the ground heaves up, some plants with shallow root systems. This causes them to be damaged or die in the winter. Use shredded bark, leaves or straw but do not put it on too early. You should wait until the ground starts to freeze. Small critters might make a nest in it if you put it down too soon. There is no need to prune off the dead growth after a hard frost. I believe it helps to keep it on. Prune off in spring when you start to see new growth at the base.

Fox Farm's Multi-Purpose Planting Mix

is a concentrated blend of organic peat, composted forest humus, earthworm castings, Norwegian kelp meal and bat guano: nature's finest soil amendments. The best medium for lush flower and vegetable gardens, pH-balanced Planting Mix is ready to use right from the bag.



Mums Fall Friends

Flowering Kale- These plants thrive in cool weather and full sun. Great mixed in planters with Mums.

Pansies-Pansies are one of the most popular and recognizable cool weather annuals. Some may survive the winter if mulched.

Ornamental Peppers-Ornamental pepper plants grow well indoors or outside. These peppers are very hot. They grown for their great fall color added to planters.

Millet-This purple foliage plant is the AAS Gold Medal Winner and stays beautiful spring through fall!

Asters– This is their time to shine. Gives nice color in shades of blue and pink added to fall planters.

Rubeckia– Black-Eyed Susan offers bold splashes of reliable color from mid summer to fall.

Put it in a planter, then plant in a perennial garden before the ground freezes, mulch.



Planting Spring Bulbs

The first thing you must do before planting time starts, is to purchase bulbs that look healthy. They should be firm, not at all soft. You must also make sure the bulbs are hardy for your area. Then gather the supplies you need like a trowel, bulb planter, bulb food etc. After you have everything you need, you can start preparing the area you have chosen for your spring flower garden. Make sure your area has good drainage. You can test a spot by digging a hole and pouring water into it. If the water drains well, it will be a good spot. You can fix your heavy soil by adding compost or a soil conditioner to the area. When your soil is ready there are a couple of options on planting. I like to plant in clusters or in large groups. The other option is planting individually around your other perennials. Follow the planting instructions for the correct depth of type of bulb you are planting.

Here's how to begin:



1. Prepare your soil– Use any kind of well composted manure, soil conditioner, homemade compost. Dig up the soil and mix in any of the above mentioned. Make a large area for mass planting or use a bulb digger for small areas
2. Place the bulbs with the pointy side up. Follow the instructions on the package for the correct planting depth.
3. Sprinkle with bone meal or any kind of bulb food.
4. Cover bulbs with your good soil mix. Pat down but don't compact the soil. Mulch your areas with shredded bark, leaves or straw to protect them when the ground starts thawing and then starts freezing again.

Tip: Dip bulbs in a solution of water and powdered Plantskydd or ready to use to protect them from critters!

Protecting Your Newly Planted Bulbs

In the fall, you spend all day long digging and preparing your garden for what you hope will be a beautiful display of color in the spring. You find out that only half of what you planted came up. That's very disappointing to say the least.

Now, it's true weather could also be one of the culprits, but it's more likely it's those pesky furry critters. Deer, rabbits, gophers, mice, voles and squirrels just to name a few, are the ones having a gourmet meal with your newly planted bulbs. You can just hear them say, "Ahh! Smell that fresh dirt. I think someone has invited us to lunch."

Moles are sometimes blamed for most of the damage. After all they do dig the tunnels and push things around that are in their way. But really they are only looking for grubs. What is eating your bulbs from down under is most likely mice and voles. They just thank the mole for making the tunnels for them.

The best way to keep them away is to try to deter the mole so that they stop digging all those tunnels in the first place. One way to do this is to make sure your garden is free for weeds and debris. Another is to use rodent controls. There are many products out there that are safe to use around the garden. Deer, rabbits and squirrels are the masters of the garden. They just look at you from their hiding places and laugh. They will dig up and eat almost anything that they find tasty.

Here are a few things you can try to keep them away:

2. Fencing is one solution that works but it may not be something you wish to use.
3. Using plants that deer don't like may help if you plant them around the plants they do.
4. Products, there are all kinds of smelly solutions that are

natural to spray or sprinkle around the garden areas. One of my favorites is called **Deer Scram**. It is all natural containing things like; garlic, cloves, dried blood and more. It even works under snow for 100 days. So put it on this fall. I had a customer tell me about it first. I tried it and it worked. I didn't have to replant my lettuce or cole crops for the first time last spring. Of course, what works for one may not always work for another.

5. For squirrels, try setting up their own lunch area far away from your garden if possible. Serve them corn and peanuts.
6. Cover your bulbs with screening or chicken wire. The critter won't like digging in that. It can be disguised by using a mulch. Although you'll have to remove the screen in the spring so your bulbs can grow.
7. Try dog fur or human hair. If you don't have a dog, go to a dog groomer. They should be happy to give away fur. As well as the beauty shop giving you some fresh cut hair. These both work for awhile but the birds love it and will build their nests with it.
8. The last idea would be to plant bulbs that critters don't like. Here's a list for : **Non Edible Bulbs**

Daffodils (Narcissus), Hyacinths, Crocuses, Snowdrops (Galanthus), Winter Aconite (Eranthis), Grape hyacinths (Muscari), Squill (Puschkinia), Frillilara (Crown Imperials)

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Natural & Organic Garden Supply



Patty's Plants

Patty's Hot Spiced Brussels Sprouts

2lbs Brussels Sprouts
1t cayenne pepper
2 1/2 cups water
4 heads dill
2 1/2 cups vinegar
4 garlic cloves (opt)
3T pickling salt
4 heads dill (opt)
2 jalapeno peppers or 1 habanero pepper

Cook whole Brussels sprouts until just tender. Pack in hot sterilized pint jars. Combine water, vinegar, salt, cayenne pepper, hot peppers (left whole but cut top off and take out seeds). **Wear gloves when working with hot peppers.** Cook vinegar solution for 10 minutes. Remove hot peppers and pour over Brussels sprouts in, leaving a 1/4-inch headspace. Add a clove of garlic, 1 extra dill head, a slice of hot pepper in jar (optional). Adjust sterilized lids and process pints 15 minutes in boiling-water bath canner.

Makes about 4 pints

Organic & Natural Products for Pesky Critters

Patty's Plants carries all these products. New this year are **I Must Garden Animal Repellents** and **Cedar Creek Products** for chipmunks, squirrels, deer and rabbits.

Deer Scram slowly breaks down through biodegradation and remains naturally effective for up to 45 days (or more!) in summer and up to 100 days in winter.

Rabbit Scram is blended from selected organic and natural components, Rabbit Scram rabbit repellent is sniffed off the ground by foraging rabbits before they enter your gardens.

Mole Scram has been proven to quickly and effectively reduce and eliminate mole activity!

Get Away repels by odor and taste. Repels deer, rabbits, squirrels, raccoons, dogs and cats. Spray around and on bird feeders to keep squirrels off of them.

Deer Pharm can be sprayed right on foliage and buds. Made with certified organic oils. Also repels small mammals.

Plantskydd has granular, powder concentrate and ready to use spray. #1 most tested. Acts as a fertilizer too. Powder concentrate lasts up to 6 months over the winter on dormant plants. Keeps away: Deer, rabbits, voles, chipmunks, squirrels and opossum.