

Extension Notes

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AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

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Fall Gardens Pop with Mums

Mums bring new life to the fall garden and spruce up a front porch. All around Kentucky, garden centers offer many varieties of colorful blooms.

Fewer daylight hours and longer nights trigger flowering, which make mums a popular fall choice. Nurseries often artificially do this by pulling dark cloths over the plants in late summer and early fall, which stimulates blooming. If you have mums growing in the landscape, the natural decrease in day length will do the trick as well.

You have dozens of varieties from which to choose, but mums generally fall into one of two groups: garden or hardy mums and cutting mums or florist mums. Florist mums usually are tender and will not survive winter.

When buying a mum for fall color, look for the plant with tight buds that haven't flowered yet to make the plant last longer. Choose the variety you want based on the ones close to it that have already bloomed.

Water is another key to making your mum last longer. Place the mum in a larger pot when you bring it home to help it retain more water. If you leave it in its original container, check the soil at least every other day by simply putting a finger into the soil, at least to the first knuckle. If the soil is dry, your mum needs water.

Make sure water gets good contact with plant roots and the soil. Either water from the bottom up in a pan or pail of water, or from the sides of the pot with a watering can or garden hose. Watering overhead on the leaves or buds may cause them to quickly deteriorate. To avoid root rot, don't allow mums to stand in water long.

Once flowers begin to fade, "deadhead" or pick off the fading blooms, which will promote new growth and make the plant look healthier. If you want to enjoy garden mums inside, find a good location near a south-facing window, out of direct sunlight. Keep it away from heating or air conditioning vents that tend to dry the flowers. Keep the soil moist, but not soggy.

Mums prefer moderate night temperatures, about 60 degrees Fahrenheit. If you expect frost, protect outdoor mums by moving them under cover overnight.

Once the plants have finished blooming, they will stop growing. You can either add them to your compost pile or plant them in your garden. Be aware, however, even the best gardeners find that mums planted in the fall often fail to establish in our climate.

For more information about fall flowers, contact the Carter County office of the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service. The Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment is an Equal

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Upcoming Events:

- The **Grayson Farmer's Market** has completed their season at the Extension Office shed. However, they will be set up inside the Blue Goose Building (old Brown's Mobile Home Parts) on Main Street October 21st at 5:00 PM during Octoberfest. Senior vouchers, Kid's Bucks, and Double Dollars can be redeemed during this pop-up market. The **Olive Hill Farmer's Market** is located in the Save-a-Lot parking lot and will be open through October 30th on Saturdays and Wednesdays at 8:00 AM and Mondays at 3:00 PM until sell out each day.
- **East Kentucky Hay Contest Awards** – October 24th @ 6:00 PM – Wolfe County Extension Office – Call 474-6686 to register.
- **Northeast Area Livestock Association Meeting** – October 26th @ 6:00 – Carter County Extension Office - Speaker: Dr. Michelle Arnold, Ruminant Veterinarian - UK Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory