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August 2011

The Truth About Mums



Massive mounds of color evoking Autumn, and usually a minimal purchase almost anywhere from late August through September, just in time for your fall display. That's what mums have become. Being the kind of folks who want to have our cake and eat it, too, we think we can plant this beauty in our gardens and enjoy the same show year after year.



Unfortunately that's not how it works out. Mums have been extensively hybridized to create the massive flowering we've come to expect. Consistently perennialized varieties are much less florific. True, they are quite perennial, but one variety I have blooms regularly in June – not later in the season when you need that color boost – and the flowers are far more sparse: an okay perennial, but nothing like what we get in the fall.



Creating this big show of color for fall means fertilizing the plants EVERY time you water. For the last few months my chores have included feeding the cats, feeding the dogs, feeding the birds and feeding the mums!

If you want to try to perennialize your mum plants, get them in the ground as soon as possible and keep them well watered and fertilized. Don't cut off the flowers, which help keep the crown of the plant from rotting by holding the snow and rain at bay.



A slightly protected space against a south wall would be the optimum planting spot. Open up the root ball some and cross your fingers – you may get a return! Otherwise enjoy them for what they are: a sign of the return of cooler fall weather and the last outdoor days of the season.
For more information on our mums, visit Syngenta Flowers, Inc.

Dates to remember:

The Garden Center will be closed August 18 to 21.
We will be open regular hours the last two weeks of August until Labor Day.
September Hours: Friday-Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Fall Sale begins the first day of Autumn, September 23.
Perennials: Buy one, get one free. ALL shrubs and trees, including fruit, 25% off.

Planning a Landscape Bed

Getting from here ...

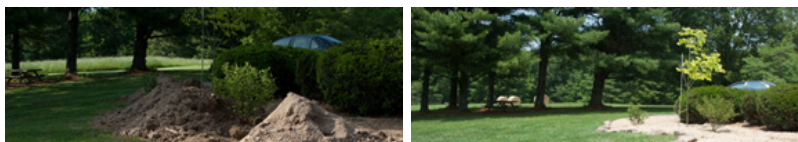


to here:



takes planning, preparation, muscle and sweat, as well as money and more than a little patience.
And when the project is complete, it's completely worth the trouble, time and expense.

In the upper photo, the grass has been killed in the area where the new bed will eventually be planted. After a couple of weeks, the owner rototilled the area a couple of times, in preparation for delivery of nearly six tons of topsoil.





After the topsoil was spread, a rock border was then put in place, one rock at a time.

The nearly blank slate is now ready for planting. A Heart of Gold redbud is front-and-center in front of the foundation of pre-existing yews, and is flanked on either side by Prince Charming lilacs. Now for the fun part – filling in all that empty space.



Massing plants, as we've done with day lilies, spirea and primrose, is an effective way to create a finished look the first year a landscape bed is planted. This area gets plenty of sun, and will display continuous color throughout the spring and summer. Other plants in the bed are spring-flowering baptisia, garden phlox, rudbeckia, echinacea, hibiscus, zebra grass and lemon verbena. There's plenty of room for annuals, as well ... including, perhaps, some of those lovely mums!

To finish the bed, creeping sedum was planted at the edge of the entire rock border. Next year the sedum will fill out, spread and spill over the rocks, helping the area look as if it's been there for several seasons. A load of mulch finished the job ... for this year.



As time goes by, new plants will be added and old plants will be moved or culled. For now, though, the foundation has been laid for years of gardening pleasure.

Don't forget Fall Pansies!

Beginning in mid-September we'll be offering Majestic Giant and Delta varieties for \$15.95 per flat of deep-cell 36s. Remember that September hours are weekends only. Stop in early for best selection.

Groundworks Nursery is on the web!

All our plant varieties are listed on our website. Click through to [Groundworks Nursery](#) on the web to see what's available. We were recently featured in the *Charleston Gazette*. [Click here for the article](#). Also, be sure to "Like" us on Facebook. [Click here to visit our Facebook page](#).

Forward to a Friend

Do you know someone who wants to improve and beautify their lawn and garden? Please forward this newsletter!

Look for the next issue of eGleanings in a month or so. We look forward to your visits throughout the growing season. We're located along the Greenbrier River east of Hinton, WV, on Route 3. Questions? Comments? Call us at 304.466.4440.

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