

Chrysanthemums Offer Spectacular Fall Color in Louisiana

Looking to add color to your containers and landscape beds? While the majority of bedding plants sold for landscape use in Louisiana are classified as warm season annuals, there are options for the upcoming cooler temperatures. Cool season bedding plants include pansies, dianthus, snapdragons, viola, ornamental kale, alyssum, and stock. Being mid-August in Louisiana, it is too early for many of the cool season plants I just mentioned. Many of these plants will be available in local nurseries and garden centers by mid- to late-September and should be planted by mid-October.

Chrysanthemums, better known as mums or garden mums, are an option for spectacular fall color and are available now or will be here shortly. Garden mums are dense, mound-shaped plants with dark green foliage and produce hundreds of flower buds. Common flower colors on garden mums are available in a range of yellow, orange, red, maroon, and white.

When purchasing garden mums from local nurseries or garden centers, find plants with dozens of unopened buds and relatively few open flowers instead of purchasing plants that are already in full bloom. This is one common mistake many consumers make and results in blooms that don't last long after purchase.

The most common uses for garden mums are in decorative containers on porches, patios, and walkways, along with being placed in landscape beds. Regardless of how the mums are to be used, remember they need to be placed in a sunny location in soil that promotes good drainage. The majority of homeowners use garden mums to add annual color to their landscape during the fall and discard the plant after the fall season. However, another option is to use them as perennials. If you so choose, cut back the garden mums in mid- to late-winter after they have finished blooming. In the spring the plant will begin to start growing and producing more foliage and will bloom again next fall, once again providing your landscape with wonderful color.

For more information about this or other topics contact Sara Rogers, Jackson Parish County Agent, with the LSU AgCenter at 259-5690 or srogers@agcenter.lsu.edu.