

Chrysanthemums can be a wonderful addition to your landscape and are considered the queen of fall flowers. They provide great cut flowers and can be grown in many ways, from mounds with many blossoms to large, disbudded show types. The Bay Area Chrysanthemum Society strives to teach the best growing techniques, and we encourage you to join us! The following are basic growing techniques for chrysanthemums.

1. Chrysanthemums prefer and do their best in a location which has full sun. You can have good results with a little as 5 hours of sunlight a day. Filtered or light shade in the afternoon is beneficial.
2. Avoid streetlights, porch lights, and car lights shining on your mums. Unwanted light will cause your buds to set late or not bloom at all. Light prevents the bud formation.
3. Chrysanthemums prefer good drainage and do not like extreme moisture. Growing in pots or raised beds will help with poor drainage. For chrysanthemums grown in pots, keep them moist and water three to four times a week or daily during high temperatures. For chrysanthemums in the ground, water two to three times a week. Water early in the day and avoid watering in the hottest part of the day as it can severely damage your plants. If you choose to water late in the afternoon, do so before sunset to avoid wet foliage at night. Use mulches to help keep plants from drying out, cool the soil, and keep down weed growth.
4. Chrysanthemums should be planted in an area with no competition from trees, shrubbery, and other plantings. Virtually any type of garden soil is fine, but heavy clay soils should be amended with peat moss and other organic materials. Alfalfa pellets add both organic material as well as nutrients. Aged manure is also a good addition to the soil.
5. Chrysanthemums do their best when a balanced plant food is used. You have your choice of organic or inorganic plant foods. Organic plant foods such as bone meal, manures, leaf mold, compost, dried blood meal, and alfalfa all work well. Inorganic chemical-based fertilizers such as 10-10-10 or 16-16-16 work well. You can find water-soluble types. These are mixed with water and used as either a foliar feed or on the ground. Bagged fertilizers, as well as additions of superphosphate, dolomite lime, or gypsum, are also beneficial.
6. The three most important numbers and elements you should know about fertilizers are listed on the label. All plant foods, whether organic or inorganic, will list the makeup of the fertilizer. An example is a bag of 5-10-10 fertilizer. The first number, 5, represents nitrogen, which promotes rapid growth and deep green color. The second number, 10, represents phosphorus, which promotes root growth and ripening of stems. The third number, 10, stands for potassium or potash, which promotes sturdy green growth and hard, ripe wood. Members can tell you which fertilizer to use at different times of the year.
7. Disease and insect control is a must. Whether you use organic or chemical control is up to you. Most growers choose a middle-of-the-road program using chemical and organic products. Ask a member for suggestions to help identify your specific pest or disease problems. Our common goal is to control and prevent problems before they start. Common diseases are mildew and virus-type diseases. Chemical and organic controls are available.
8. The most common insects to be controlled are aphids (black to green in color), worms (the green caterpillar types), earwigs, leaf miners, slugs and snails. Most members use snail and slug bait with earwig control, Bug Geta II, and Bayer Tree and Shrub Insect Control. Sometimes, simply spraying your plants with plain water works for aphid control.
9. Most chrysanthemums will require staking as many are tall growers. Our emphasis in the Society is growing the large disbud types and believe the beauty of a few large blooms is well worth the effort and superior to many smaller blooms. We challenge you to grow and show your blooms in the Society's Fall Show.



Chrysanthemums are grouped by the National Chrysanthemum Society into 13 different classifications:



**Class 1, Irregular Incurve**, is the giant of the chrysanthemum family. Their form curves in, presenting a loose, irregular appearance. Many contain skirted rows of petals (florets). They are best disbudded.



**Class 2, Reflex**. Blooms in this class have florets which reflex back to the stem and are also a large bloom type. Best as a disbudded bloom.



**Class 3, Regular Incurve**, is a highly formal incurved type with the ideal bloom forming a complete ball. Exceptionally long-lasting. Disbud for best results.



**Class 4, Decorative**, are flattened with florets presenting a more open appearance. These make wonderful cut flowers.



**Class 5, Intermediate Incurve**. Flowers in this class are not as tightly incurved as the regular incurve class. They are more open and loose in form.



**Class 6, Pompons**, produce masses of blooms. Small and round in form, Pompons make great cut flowers and are mostly grown as sprays.



**Class 7, Single and Semi-Double**. All have an open daisy center. Smaller flowers in this class are good for displays.



**Class 8, Anemones**, have a full-domed, raised cushion center. They make wonderful cut flowers, and larger types should be disbudded.



**Class 9, Spoons**. This class has spoon-like, rayed florets as well as a daisy-like center. This class can be very easy to grow.



**Class 10, Quills**. Florets are straight and tubular, with open tips. Very similar to the Spider class. Blooms do best disbudded.



**Class 11, Spiders**. The most popular and exotic of the Chrysanthemum family. Long, drooping petals curl in a fishhook manner. Disbud.



**Class 12, Brush and Thistle**. All are small blooms and can resemble paintbrushes and thistles. Great fillers for bouquets.



**Class 13, Unclassified or Exotic**. These blooms fit none of the other classes. Often have twisted florets. Most grown as disbuds.

# BAY AREA CHRYSANTHEMUM SOCIETY

A Chapter of the  
National Chrysanthemum Society



Web pages:

[www.mums.org](http://www.mums.org)

[www.bayareamum.org](http://www.bayareamum.org)

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Please consider joining our society! We meet the third Sunday of every month, except November and December, at Union Bank, 590 North 6th Street, San Jose, or a member's garden.