

ask the landscape professional

Linda K. Lillie of Sprigs & Twigs



Welcome to my weekly series!

Feel free to send me questions you'd like to have me answer and I will do my best to address the ones of most general interest.

Email or mail your questions to: info@sprigsandtwigs.net or Linda Lillie, Sprigs & Twigs Inc, PO Box 245, Gales Ferry, CT 06335

Question of the Week: *"This time of year, I see Mums for sale all over and I love them, but for some reason after I plant them in the ground, I never can get them to survive the winter" ... Catherine, Old Lyme*

Linda's Answer:

There are actually two kinds of Chrysanthemums, (nicknamed "mums"): "Hardy Mums" and "Greenhouse or Florist" Mums. Most of the mums that you see for sale in the box stores and florist shops in the fall are "greenhouse or florist" mums that are not intended to survive the winter. They are basically pricy annuals. Greenhouse or florist mums have been grown to put all of their energy into September blooming and not developing their roots. When you plant them in the ground in the fall, there generally isn't enough time for them to establish a root system to survive the winter. Then, with the winter freeze and thaw cycles, often times they get popped out of the ground and the roots die. If you want mums as perennials, look for ones that are labeled "Hardy" and plant them in the spring for best results. You can also grow them from seed over the winter and plant them in the spring.

Mums have been around for centuries. As far back as the 15th Century BC, they were being cultivated as an herb in China. Since then they have been hybridized into hundreds of varieties. Mums made their way to this country in colonial times and today have become the most widely produced pot plant in the United States because they are so easy to grow.

A lot of mum varieties are full of petals and do not have much pollen, so they are not much use to butterflies and bees. Asters are my favorite choice for fall color. They come in blues, purples, white and pinks and they are a wonderful perennial that are great for the pollinators and will winter-over well. Give them a try.



Sprigs & Twigs is scheduling appointments now for Fall Garden Close-downs, Fall Leaf Cleanups and 2015 Garden Design. Call us for to discuss your landscape project.

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Linda K. Lillie is the President of Sprigs & Twigs, Inc, the premier landscape tree care & lawn care company in SE Connecticut for the last 17 years. She is a graduate of Connecticut College in Botany, a Connecticut Master Gardener and a national award winning landscape designer for her design and installation work.

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