

MARCH CULTURAL NOTES

1. **Clean pots and gather materials for potting:**

- For soilless growers, supplies include soilless mix, Early Season fertilizer (12-45-10). Most of our growers use the M & R Soilless potting mix sold by the club at \$10 /bag. Another good alternative is Sunshine #4 professional growers mix – can be purchased at Home Depot.

2. **Pot mums into 4 or 6-inch pot:**

- Clay pots are recommended when possible for the 4 or 6 inch potting as these pots breathe and dry out faster during cool March and April days.
- Wash used pots in a bleach/water solution, i.e. 2 teaspoons per gallon of water. Then rinse in fresh water. Let the cleaned pots set in the clear water for 3 or 4 minutes to clear out the bleach. Change the rinse water occasionally to clear out the bleach from previous rinses.
- Pot on when the ring of roots around the bottom of the pot is substantial. Do not compact the mix and leave room at the top for watering.

3. **Move pots outdoors:**

- After mums have become well established in the new pots (1-2 weeks) move mums outdoors or to cold frame to slow the foliage growth and toughen up the plants. The desirable ambient temperature is 50 to 60 degrees.
- To keep roots warm and at a stable temp, bury the pots in the soil or in a layer of compost or manure. Six inches is a good depth for the compost or manure. A cold frame is the best solution for this stage!
- Lacking a good sunny location, B-9 is a growth retardant spray mix that tends to help plants from getting too leggy. It is available through the club.

4. **Stopping Dates:**

- Review stopping dates and stop mums as their stopping dates arrive. Very few varieties require pinching in March unless a double pinching regimen is being followed (Phil Houghton March 15 and May 15 for example).
- Refer to the various ECA lists of stopping dates. Stopping date list are available on our website.

5. **Keep growing vigorously:**

- Water as needed, but keep relatively dry
- Spray or control aphids
- Fertilize soil less plants with 9-45-15 starting the 2nd or 3rd week after potting. Use fertilizer at ½ strength that is approximately ½ teaspoon/gallon.

