

### Planting

- Growing medium should retain adequate water after irrigation but also drain sufficiently to provide aeration during rainy weather. A good target is 12 to 18 percent air-filled pore space. The pH range should be 5.8 to 6.2. Peat based mixes or heavier bark based mixes are commonly used.
- Plant your cuttings as soon as they arrive or as soon as they are rooted (if you root your own) to prevent stress which can stall initial growth. Plant just deep enough to cover the root ball or a bit deeper if using Oasis<sup>®</sup> liners.
- Always water-in cuttings with a complete N-P-K fertilizer solution containing full-strength liquid feed immediately after planting.
- Plant outdoor crops in mid to late June after the night temperatures are above 60°F. This will allow for more growth than planting in late May, when premature bud initiation from cold night temperatures could occur.
- Make sure the pots are adequately spaced to prevent plants from touching, which will allow varieties to reach their full potential.

### Pinching

- Pinching is no longer required for producing natural season garden mums.
- If you still pinch your cuttings, leave a few not pinched this year and see how they turn out - you will likely be surprised.

### Florel

- If you plan to use Florel<sup>™</sup> plant growth regulator with your garden mums this year as insurance against budding, put the first spray on the cuttings while in propagation or one to three days after planting. Do not spray Florel on stressed cuttings.
- Rates of 350 to 500 ppm are commonly used with spraying frequency of every 10 to 14 days.
- The Florel effect is reduced on shoots that have already initiated buds, so it is important to start Florel early to maintain flowering uniformity of finished plants.

### Irrigation

- Drip irrigation creates a better environment for the plants and can be designed to significantly reduce water and fertilizer waste.
- Plants should not be allowed to wilt during the first third of the crop as that can have negative effects on finished plant size. During the final phase, restricting water can be used to tone the plant and prevent overgrowth.

### Fertilizer

- Growers using water soluble fertilizer (WSF) often use an ammonium based fertilizer for the first two weeks and then switch to a nitrate based fertilizer. Electrical conductivity (EC) values of 2.0-3.5 mS/cm (SME extract) or 2.5-4.5 mS/cm (pour-through extract) should be maintained.
- Growers should regularly monitor growing medium EC values. Low or decreasing EC values would indicate the need for supplemental fertility.
- The WSF rate can be reduced once the plant body has been built and/or once there is a need to irrigate more than once a day.
- Lower N-P-K rates than traditionally used for mums (100 to 150 ppm N) are possible if extra micronutrients are added to maintain their level. Similar to feeding at a 250 ppm N level with a WSF that contained micros.
- It is important to re-feed your pots after rain to get fertilizer back in the media and available for the plants.
- If you are using controlled release fertilizer (CRF) instead of liquid feed, be sure it includes micronutrients. The recommended application rates vary by product and are listed on the labels. High application rates are required to provide adequate nutrition. If at all possible, water-in the plants with a WSF to boost initial fertility.



Natural Sea Mums - Drip Tape



Natural Sea Mums - Planted

All photos are the property of Syngenta unless otherwise noted.

©2014 Syngenta. **Important: Always read and follow label instructions. Some products may not be registered for sale or use in all states or counties. Please check with your state or local extension service to ensure registration status. The Syngenta logo is a trademark of a Syngenta Group Company. Florel<sup>™</sup> is a trademark of Bayer EnvironmentalScience. Oasis<sup>®</sup> is a trademark of Smithers-Oasis Company.**