

THE MUM CHRONICLE

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OLD DOMINION CHRYSANTHEMUM SOCIETY

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ODCS website: www.odcsmums.club

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Events Box:

Due to the current Pandemic situation, the Old Dominion Chrysanthemum Society is canceling the monthly meeting until further notice.

In this newsletter is instructional information on mum beds and pinching.

PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE

Thank you to all for responding to our inquiry on your King's mums orders. We are happy to report that everyone received them! Better yet, it appears that all of the King's mums were received in excellent condition! Some members received their rooted mums in April and other received them in May. We hope the cold weather spell did not harm your mums. They should all be nicely potted in small containers by now.

Reflecting back to last year this time, we participated in the plant sales at Ayr Hill in Vienna and Green Spring Gardens in Annandale. Alas it was not to happen this year. The plant sales are efforts to fund ODCS. In spite of this, we still managed to make a small gain on our annual purchase. Galen Goss, our Treasurer, will address this in detail.

By now, you should have received a refund for your canceled garden and pot mums order, and your returned check for canceled supply order. Thank you, Galen, for the prompt refund.

Let us hear how you and your mums are doing. We hope everyone continues to stay well.



Potted mums, the beginning of something beautiful!

RESULTS OF THE SPRING PLANT AND SUPPLY SALES

Galen Goss, Treasurer

It has certainly been a strange year.

- First, we ordered plants, then we cancelled plant orders.
- First, King's was going to send 1 big order, then King's agreed to send 29 little orders. ODCS paid any extra postage that King's incurred to send the individual orders. King's efforts were most gracious – it certainly added time and effort to his work. The extra postage costs were not insignificant.
- First, we were going to order supplies, then we cancelled those plans.
- First, we collected money from our members for plants and supplies, then after the cancellations, we refunded funds to our members.

Talk about hectic and a bookkeeping nightmare. But I think I got everything straight. All refunds were made. Checks for supplies that had not been cashed were returned.

After everything, it would appear that ODCS came out about \$300.00 ahead. The final number will depend on how much we need to refund Phipps Conservatory – we are still working on that.

I thank our members for their patience and understanding throughout the process. I have not received any feedback that a wrong amount was refunded or that plants were not received.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Please save the date for the following events, subject to later update.

- October 24th - 25th - ODCS Show at Merrifield Garden Center, Fairfax, VA
- November 15th - Annual Brunch

As you can see from our list of Upcoming Events, our Annual July Picnic has been cancelled. Galen and Amy Goss had volunteered to host the picnic, but they feel that a gathering of the expected size would not be good. Too many of us are in the vulnerable age group and/or have underlying conditions. We hope that 2021 will be a healthier year and we can again have our picnic in a safe environment.

PREPARATION FOR MUM BEDS

Since we have been having unusually cool weather for May, it is still time for mum growers to preparing their mum beds for planting. Resist the urge to get out and start digging just because the sun is shining and the weather is a little warmer. Do not begin until the soil is dry enough to crumble easily in your hand. Start too early, the work will be harder and all you will do is harm.

If you have been growing in the mum bed before this year, do not dig too deep. A shallow turning of the top 4" to 6" is enough. For a new bed, double spading depth is recommended then leave it to weather for as long as you can before final raking.

It is not too late to have your soil tested if it has not been done for a while. Your nearest public library can provide you the State of Virginia Soil Test Kit box and form.

Mums can be very happy in well prepared, slightly acid garden soil. To grow chrysanthemums successfully you should have a pH reading near 6.5. As with most plants, mums appreciate well-drained soil with lots of organic matter, such as compost. Adding some standard garden fertilizer (such as 5-10-5) to the soil for growth and some super phosphate for root development always helps.

PINCHING

(Chapter 7, pages 23-25 in *Beginner's Handbook for New Growers of Chrysanthemums*)

The opportunity to manipulate the plant size and shape, and the bloom type and bloom date lies in the magical effects of pinching.

Pinching Defined

Pinching involves the removal of the growing tip of the plant. This stops the upward growth of the plant, thus it is sometimes called “stopping”.

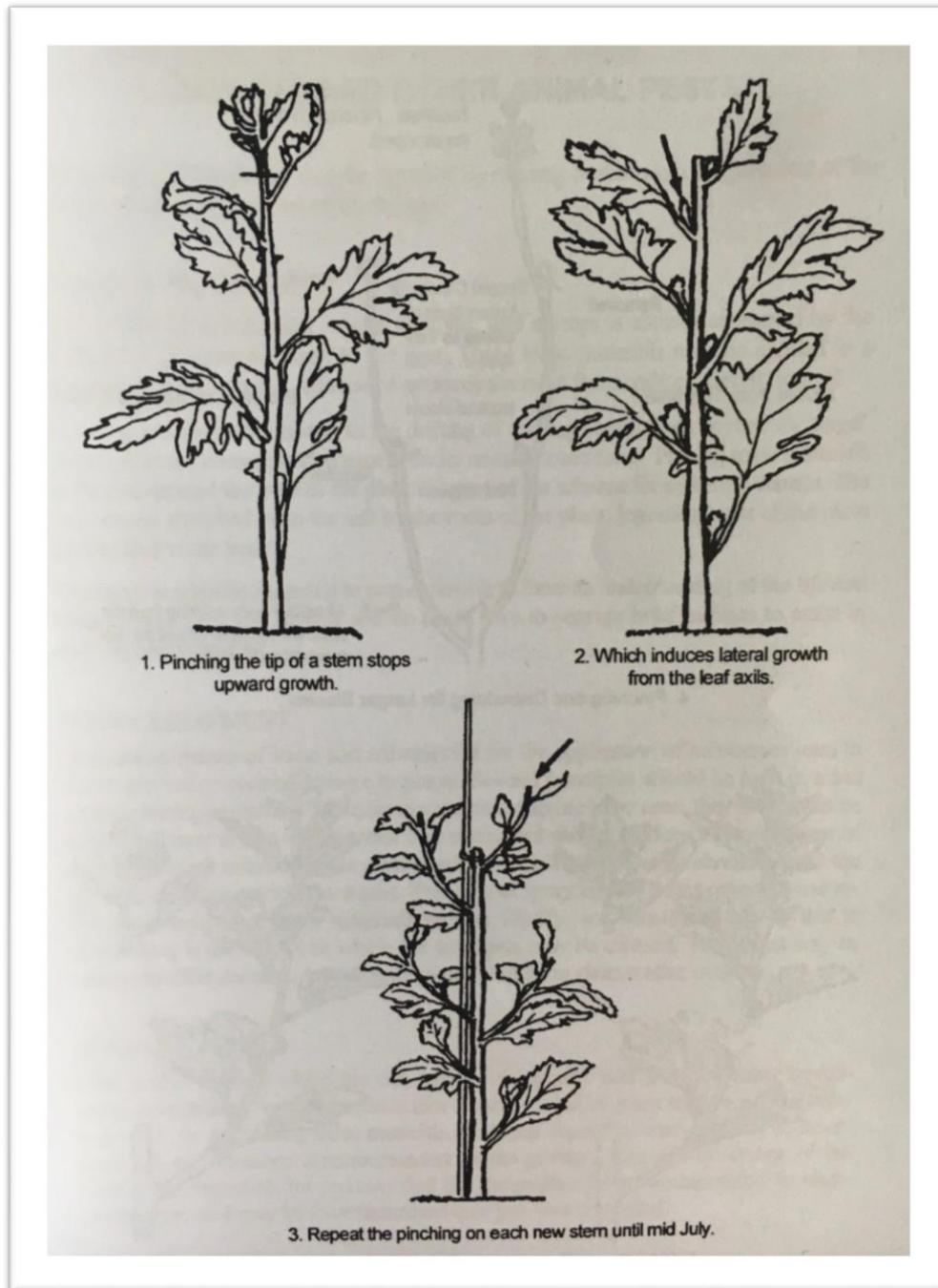
A soft pinch removes a small amount from the tip of the plant, perhaps a half an inch. A hard pinch removes the topmost three or four inches of the plant.

Effects of Pinching

There is a minute group of cells which form a bud at the base of every leaf along the stem. These are called axillary buds. The growth and development of these axillary buds are triggered by certain hormones within the plant. When a pinch is made and the growing tip of the plant is removed, then all small buds in the leaf axils may be stimulated and begin to grow.

Why Pinch?

1. To increase the number of stems.
2. To control the height of the plant at maturity.
3. Some control of the bloom date.
4. To develop type of flower buds desired, “first crown”, “second crown” or “terminal” bud.



All plants should be set out in June. The tips on garden cultivars and disbuds should be pinched after four leaves or so of new growth has appeared. Pot up when roots reach the sides of the container. (See the May newsletter for potting up information and feeding schedule.)

Supports should be in place and a watch kept for the arrival of aphids. (Use a suitable systemic spray.) When rainfall is deficient, plants should be watered. Fertilize weekly.

Ed Mascali is available to answer questions you may have on growing mums. You may email your questions to Ed Mascali at emascali1@yahoo.com. Please include your phone numbers in your email to Ed, so he could answer your questions over the phone.

FERTILIZER

Since our Supply Order was canceled, an alternate fertilizer that we have good success with is Jack's Classic All Purpose 20-20-20, Jack's Fertilizer 9-45-15 Plant Starter, and Jack's Fertilizer 10-30-20 Blossom Booster. They are available at Target, garden centers or from Amazon.

GROWER'S HANDBOOKS

Everything you want to know about mums but afraid to ask? Galen Goss has copies of the *Beginner's Handbook* (\$10), the *Advanced Handbook* (\$10) and *Mums the Word* book by Pat Stockett Johnston (\$15) for sale. These are very handy informational books, valuable for new and experienced growers. Please contact Galen at gossg@verizon.net.



EDITOR'S MUSING

I placed the mums out into the side garden. It will be interesting to see how they develop. They seem stunted, but since I placed them in the final pot, they will need time to stretch the root system. I am ordering fertilizer today. I checked the water, light and the ph. level. This year has been weird, but I am still hopeful we will have a miraculous ending. Take care.