

GROWERTALKS

Culture Notes

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Winning the Game With Football Mums

Paul Gaydos

Thanks to the use of lighting and black cloth, incurve “football” chrysanthemums are a unique pot plant crop that can be produced year round or just for special holidays such as Easter, Mother’s Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Here are some take-home points for growing the best incurve mum crop possible.



Growing season

Produce all year with the use of lighting and/or black-cloth.

- Use incurve mums as an indoor potted plant. They have no real garden performance.

Pot size

- 4-in. pot with one cutting
- 6.5-in. pot with seven cuttings
- 8-in. pan with eight to 10 cuttings

Propagation

Mums are easy to root and should take just 14 to 21 days. It’s important to stick football mum cuttings directly into their finished pots. Stick cuttings directly into moist soil, and mist every five to 10 minutes for the first five days. After a callus forms on the cuttings, reduce the mist to every 20 minutes, then down to 30 minutes.

Heat: Use bottom heat to maintain a soil temperature of 72F to 78F (22C to 25.5C)

Light: 1,500-2,000 foot-candles

Feed: At Day 10 to Day 14, drench with 20-10-20 at 250 ppm plus a general purpose fungicide.

B-Nine/Dazide: At Day 14, spray at 1250 ppm.

Day length: In propagation, day length must be extended to no less than 12.5 hours.

Growing on to finish

Once the cuttings are rooted (Day 15 to Day 20), move pots directly into short day, 13-hour nights. This will prevent unwanted growth and reduce the amount of B-Nine needed. You want all the energy to go to the flower and not to building the plant. Do not pinch. Now the plants should be spaced and growing under short days.

pH: Aim for 6.2, but 6.0-6.5 is acceptable.

Media: There are a number of great commercial media available, but try to use one with a 1:2:2 ratio of mineralized soil, peat moss and perlite.

Feed: Rotate with 20-10-20 at 350 ppm twice, then CaNO₃ at 300 ppm plus K₂O at 150 ppm twice, followed by clear water. Frequency of irrigation will depend on plant size, pot size and time of year.

Temperature: Maintain 70F to 75F (21C to 24C).

B-Nine/Dazide: Apply at 2500 ppm to 5000 ppm. Monitor your plants weekly and apply as needed. Most varieties will require two to three applications, but this depends on the variety and time of year. Don't apply after color is showing. B-Nine/Dazide will help to make a stronger, more compact plant, add life to the flower and help keep the foliage dark in color.

Disbudding: When growing football mums, it's best not to pinch, allowing only one flower per cutting. Once buds form, remove all buds from around the terminal cluster as soon as possible, leaving only the largest center bud to remain. The one remaining center bud will become much larger and longer lasting.

QUICKPLAYS

- Direct stick
- Don't pinch
- Move plants to short days as soon as they're rooted
- Monitor plant height weekly and apply B-Nine/Dazide as needed
- Disbud as soon as possible

Paul Gaydos is broker and technical support manager for GroLink.