

GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

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Mum Anticipation

Bill Calkins

Photography by Cindy Drumgool



You're looking at 8,000 of the 20,000 garden mums currently in production at Fairview Farms in Whately, Massachusetts. The farm is in its ninth generation and has been in operation since the 1600s, continuously evolving as agriculture changed in the Connecticut River Valley. Today, locally-grown annuals make up a large part of the business, produced to supply retailers and landscapers in the local area.

Co-owner Alan Sanderson told us they do sell some product directly to local gardeners and spring 2020 was the farm's best year ever. In fact, they sold out in May. So what does that indicate for fall?

"Mums are going to be big this year," Alan says. "People can't do anything else but garden."

This feeling is echoed by many other growers anticipating a huge fall rush and uptick in shoppers, as the autumn farm entertainment and retail season begins in an unprecedented pandemic year.

You may have noticed the barns in the background of this photo. Those are tobacco barns at Fairview Farms, holding tobacco produced for cigar wrappers, grown by the family on 35 acres of fields. They've been growing tobacco for generations, part of a centuries-long tradition in the Connecticut Valley.

High-quality tobacco from the area was even referenced in John Steinbeck's 1952 novel "East of Eden," set partially on a tobacco farm in Connecticut. **GT**