

Gold Country and Mellow Moon

NEW MINNESOTA MUMS FOR 1983



Gold Country and Mellow Moon

R.E. Widmer, P.D. Ascher, and M.C. Stuart

These new introductions are the largest double flowered cultivars to be released by the University of Minnesota's Department of Horticultural Science and Landscape Architecture. They are the 63rd and 64th garden chrysanthemum introductions bred in Minnesota for the Upper Midwest.

Gold Country (77-42-7) produces a canopy of peachy-bronze, tinged-yellow, incurved, 4 to 4½ inch, fully double, decorative flowers which change to an attractive golden yellow color. Blooms usually open by the second week in September in the St. Paul area. Plants average 20 to 21 inches high and almost as wide, with medium-stiff stems clothed with clean, medium-dark green foliage. This cultivar is both attractive in the flower border and useful as a cut flower for indoor decoration. Parents are Bessy Bates and Minnesota selection 75-28-16.

Mellow Moon develops 4½ to 5 inch cream-colored, semi-incurved, fully double, decorative flowers which don't turn pink in cold weather. The stocky, sturdy, stiff-stemmed plants are densely covered with clean, rich green foliage. Flowering usually starts in the first half of September in the Twin Cities. The plants produce an attractive mass of flowers atop plants 15 to 18 inches high and 20 to 22 inches wide. The plants are unusually compact for a large flowered cultivar. Parents are French Vanilla and Minnesota selection 75-70-55.

Graft tests did not detect any stunt symptoms. Disease detection tests of original stock plants were conducted by F.L. Pflieger of the Department of Plant Pathology.

Chrysanthemum Culture

Planting Time—Plant chrysanthemums in spring after all danger of killing frost has passed. Use either small plants derived from rooted cuttings, divisions, or rooted suckers of old plants. Larger plants in various stages of development may be planted anytime during the summer or early fall.

Soil, Site, and Fertilizer—Garden chrysanthemums grow best in a well-drained loam soil and in full sun. Plants grown in semishady locations tend to grow taller, have weaker stems, and bloom later in the fall. Incorporate peat moss, compost, or well-rotted barnyard manure and superphosphate (3 to 5 pounds per 100 square feet) into the soil. If you use peat moss or do not add organic matter, use a commercial fertilizer such as 5-10-5 or a 10-10-10 formula in the spring, according to package directions. Sidedressing plants with a complete fertilizer in early August, especially in years of abundant rainfall or irrigation, also is recommended. If the fertilizer applied in the spring is a slowly available type (meaning released as the plant needs it), such as coated or organic fertilizer, the second application may not be necessary.

Cultivar Selection—Select cultivars that will bloom before the end of September in the Twin Cities area. Later blooming cultivars will fail to bloom before damaging or killing frosts in most years. Note that individual cultivars usually bloom earlier in northern Minnesota and later in southern Minnesota, in accordance with environmental differences and planting date. When plants are about 6 inches tall, pinch out the tip to induce branching and produce stockier plants. Pinch lateral branches when they have grown 6 inches. Pinching after July 4 delays flowering.

Watering—Do not let plants suffer from lack of water. One good watering or rain per week, the equivalent of 1 inch of water, usually is adequate.

Insect and Disease Control—Spraying or dusting with an all-purpose insecticide-fungicide mixture twice a month in June through September is recommended.

Late Flowering—Possible causes include:

- Wrong cultivar selection
- Insufficient sun (shaded)
- Insufficient fertilizer
- Insufficient water
- Late pinching
- Root competition from nearby trees and shrubs (injurious to most plants)
- Unusually hot weather (especially night) in August, cultivars vary in response
- Unusually cold weather in late August and September
- Insect injury
- Disease injury

Overwintering—To be reasonably certain of carrying plants over the winter, use one of the following methods:

—Dig plants in the fall and plant them in pots, flats, or similar containers. Keep them in a cold cellar over the winter at a temperature of 33° to 38°F. Plants kept in this manner need no care except occasional watering.

—Dig plants in the fall and plant them in a cold frame in a protected location. After freezing weather (November), mulch heavily with leaves, hay, or straw; then cover frame with sash, boards, or plastic film, and cover all with 6 or more inches of mulch.

—In late fall, remove some rooted suckers from around the base of the plant. Put them in small pots and carry them through the winter as house plants. Pinch off tips when shoots are 6 inches long. Instead of pinching, you may wish to take 3-inch cuttings when the shoots are 6 or more inches long.

—Although no cultivars are consistently hardy under Minnesota winter conditions, parts of plants frequently survive the winter. Divide such overwintered plants if four or more growing points are present.

Dividing—If the entire clump survives the winter, it is preferable to divide it into small clumps with 2 to 3 growing points.

Spring Pot Plants—Attractive blooming plants grown in small pots are available in the spring. After flowers on such plants fade, the plants should be cut back to 3 or 4 inches from the ground and planted in the garden for fall flowering.