

Chrysanthemums

Chrysanthemums are members of the Asteracea (Compositae) family, the chrysanthemum (*dendranthema*) is related to dahlias, sunflowers, marigolds, zinnias and cosmos. The bloom which appears as a single flower is actually hundreds of flowers called florets. Two kinds of florets are present in a single bloom, disk florets and ray florets. On a daisy type chrysanthemum the outer parts are ray florets and the center or eye is composed of disk florets. The National Chrysanthemum Society divides bloom forms into 13 classes. Among the 13 classes are the Pompon, small and compact like a pompon you would find on a hat and the Spider which resembles a spider with long spindly legs. Depending on your tastes you can find a type and color of Chrysanthemum to go with almost any decoration. I like to buy a variety of plants to add an array of color to my house in the fall.

History of Chrysanthemums

According to the National Chrysanthemum Society the chrysanthemum was first cultivated in China as a flowering herb and is described in writings as early as the 15th Century B.C. As an herb, it was believed to have the power of life. Legend has it that the boiled roots were used as a headache remedy; young sprouts and petals were eaten in salads; and leaves were brewed for a festive drink. The ancient Chinese name for chrysanthemum is "Chu." The Chinese city of Chu-Hsien (which means Chrysanthemum City) was so named to honor the flower.

Around the 8th century A.D., the chrysanthemum appeared in Japan. So taken were the Japanese with this flower that they adopted a single flowered chrysanthemum as the crest and official seal of the Emperor. The chrysanthemum in the crest is a 16-floret variety called "Ichimonjiginu." Family seals for prominent Japanese families also contain some type of chrysanthemum called a Kikumon - "Kiku" means chrysanthemum and "Mon" means crest. In Japan, the Imperial Order of the Chrysanthemum is the highest Order of Chivalry. Japan also has a National Chrysanthemum Day, which is called the Festival of Happiness.

The chrysanthemum was first introduced into the Western world during the 17th Century. In 1753 Karl Linnaeus, renowned Swedish botanist, combined the Greek words *chrysos*, meaning gold with *anthemon*, meaning flower. Linnaeus was the founder of that branch of taxonomy dealing with plants and including the science of classification and identification. Experts say this is probably an accurate description of the ancient species, as it also points out the mum's need for sunlight. The earliest illustrations of mums show them as small, yellow daisy-like flowers. Ancient growers would not recognize modern mums. Although some mums still resemble daisies, others are showier. Regardless of the flower type, they all belong to the Compositae, or daisy, family

Since the chrysanthemum was first introduced into the United States during colonial times, its popularity has grown so much that mums now reign as undisputed "Queen of the Fall Flowers." For many of us, our introduction to the chrysanthemum was a corsage for the girlfriends and mothers at Homecoming football games. Mums remain the most widely grown pot plant in the country and are one of the longest lasting of all cut flowers. This latter attribute, along with their artistic allure, make mums highly favored by floral arrangers. In the United States, the chrysanthemum is the largest commercially produced flower due to its ease of cultivation, capability to bloom on schedule, diversity of bloom forms and colors, and holding quality of the blooms.

As a landscaping plant, the chrysanthemum makes a beautiful fall display for the home garden. With skill and artistry, many varied effects can be achieved, even when only a small growing area is available. Chrysanthemums can accentuate an entrance way; provide Fall colors to a season-long growing bed; or dominate a growing area with the many varied shapes, sizes, and colors. Used in this fashion, chrysanthemums provide an outstanding climax to the season before the colds of winter arrive.

Attention Berkeley/Jefferson County Master Gardeners

Volunteer hours were due September 30th to Mary Beth Bennett in the Berkeley County Extension Office at 400 West Stephen Street, Suite 302, Martinsburg, WV 25401. We will be holding our semi-annual Master Gardener Meeting on Tuesday, October 13th at the WVU Tree Fruit Research and Education Center located on Route 9 with a potluck dinner starting at 6:30 p.m. preceded by a Master Gardener Board Meeting at 5:30. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend if you have ever participated in the Master Gardener training program in the Tri-county area. We invite back anyone who has received training and offer many opportunities to become more involved in projects in the Berkeley/Jefferson County area. If you have any questions feel free to contact Mary Beth Bennett at (304) 264-1936. See you October 13th if not before. We are busy with many community projects and would welcome you at any of them.

Beltsville Agriculture Research Tour - November 4th

The Forum for Rural Innovation is sponsoring a one day bus tour of the USDA Beltsville Agriculture Research Center on November 4, 2009. The tour is being planned to highlight the innovative agriculture research of plants, animals, human nutrition, and the environment. The Beltsville ARC is the largest USDA research facility in the United States, encompassing over 7,000 acres, and located at Beltsville, Maryland. It is a dynamic, highly diversified research facility, dating back to 1910. The tour will focus on agriculture industries and practices that can be implemented to our region, and highlight some of the historic research conducted at Beltsville. The tour bus will depart from Purcellville at 7:30 am and will return by 5:30 pm. All participants must pre-register and ride the bus. A \$35.00 per person registration fee will include bus transportation, snacks, and lunch. Registration is limited to 55 persons, and will be on a first-come first-served basis. Registration information is available at www.LoudounFarms.org or by calling 703-777-0426. This tour and the Forum for Rural Innovation are sponsored by the Offices of Agricultural Economic Development and Cooperative Extension -Loudoun, Fauquier, Clarke, Fredrick (VA), and Jefferson, Berkeley (WV), and the Shenandoah and Potomac Headwaters RC&D.

Mountain State Apple Harvest Festival Apple Displays and Contests

The 30th Annual Mountain State Apple Harvest Festival will feature Agricultural Displays and Contests at the Berkeley County Youth Fair Grounds Harry D. Shelley Park Martinsburg, WV Saturday, October 17, and Sunday, October 18, 2009. For more information on the Festival visit their website at: <http://www.msahf.com/>

Shenandoah Valley Fiber Festival October 24-25

The Shenandoah Valley Fiber Festival will be held October 24-25 at the Clarke County Fairgrounds in Berryville, VA. Admission is \$5 per person. For more information on this event visit their website at <http://www.shenandoahvalleyfiberfest.com/index.html>

Berkeley County Youth Fair Basket Bingo

The Annual Basket Bingo will be held on Sunday, October 25, 2009. Doors will open at 12:00 noon with the Basket Bingo starting at 2:00 pm. Tickets will be available soon. If you would like to be a sponsor for this event, please email Dawn Pingley at dawnt@toast.net

MGT-332: Agriculture and Food Vulnerability Assessment Training

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), WV Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety (DMAPS), WV Department of Agriculture, and the Jefferson County Development Authority are offering free Agriculture and Food Vulnerability Assessment Training through the DHS Direct Delivery Program. This training, which has been certified and approved by DHS/FEMA, will strengthen the ability of state and local communities and industry to improve intelligence and operational capabilities for prevention and deterrence of terrorist acts that target the agriculture and food sector.

This is a one and one-half day class that is open to the agriculture and food industry, federal, state, county, and local officials, extension and crop specialists, agriculture crime units, food processors, food transportation, food wholesalers and retailers, food distributors, health department officials, emergency managements agencies, meat and poultry inspection and all others involved with food and agriculture security planning.

When: November 10-11, 2009-- Beginning at 8:00 a.m. on November 10 and conclude at approximately 4:30 p.m. Class will resume at 8:00 on November 11 and conclude at approximately 12:00 p.m.

Where: West Virginia University Tree Fruit Research and Education Center, 67 Apple Harvest Lane (Located On WV Route 9 in Jefferson County) Kearneysville, West Virginia 25403

Cost: Lunch will be provided; No program fee. WV Law Enforcement Training Committee has approved for 12 hours law enforcement in service hours. Travel and Lodging will be the responsibility of the attendee with NO reimbursement.

Registration Deadline is Wednesday November 4, 2009. If you have any questions or require any assistance please contact Roy McCallister or Matt Blackwood, (304)-558-2214 or rmccallister@ag.state.wv.us

Berkeley County Judging Team Places at First Goat Skillathon

Congratulations go out to the Berkeley County Judging Team for doing well at the First Goat Skillathon held at the Washington County Agricultural Center on Saturday, October 3, 2009.

Winners were Ashley Butler, 1st place Senior Division; T. J. Morgan, 3rd place, Senior Division; Tara Burner, 1st Place Intermediate Division; Jared Hoffman, 2nd place Intermediate Division; and Cameron LeFevre, 3rd place Junior Division. Other team members, Frank Burner, 5th place Jr. Division; Carlie Ryman, 7th place Jr. Division; Cassidy Spessert, 6th place Intermediate Division; and Kristen Stuckey, 10th place Sr. Division.

Garden Tips

- Harvest winter squash
- Store squash in cool, dry location
- Plant spring bulbs
- Plant or transplant lilies that flower July 15 - Sept. 15

Until next time ...Happy Gardening and Farming!