

Ask The Plant Groom™ by Dale Groom, The Plant Groom™

For: QA1052

We have 44 Nana Nandina that continue to look worse weekly. They are degenerating to twigs and stems. What is happening?

We have some in full sun and others in partial shade. The partial shades plants are doing much better. The color in all of them is great - what ever it may be. - F. V. S.

Your Nanas may be simply reacting to freezing weather or lack of rain we've had this winter. This condition should correct itself as warmer weather arrives and spring growth begins. The 'Firepower' variety of dwarf nandina that looks very much like 'Nana' does not normally have these problems once established.

I would make sure the drainage is good in your beds. Nandinas do not like wet feet. I would make sure they have approximately 3 – 4" of bark mulch all around them. Another element, heat, if your planting is receiving reflected heat from a wall or drive it may be too much. For example, a West facing bed may have more difficulty in full sun than an East side bed due to the heat build up. Should this be the situation at your place you may do better with a different variety of nandina such as 'Firepower'.

I have all types of weeds such as crabgrass and dandelions in my rose bed. What can I use to control them? - R. O.

I use some "hands and knees" gardening to pull all the weeds possible out of our rose plantings then mulch heavily. I use approximately 3 - 4" of pine bark mulch, which helps greatly to reduce weed populations. What few weeds that do pop up I hand pull them.

The heavy mulching allows weeds to be removed very easily.

I would not use any broadleaf herbicides around roses. If you decide to try a pre-emergent in your rose bed this season do two things. First, make sure you read the entire label to make sure the product can be used around roses. Secondly, follow the instructions to the letter. If you don't find one labeled for use around roses ... DO NOT use it.

Texas Cooperative Extension, Texas A & M University system, Certified Master Gardeners at 214-904-3053, M – F, 8am –4:30pm can assist you with this issue. A Texas

Certified Nursery Professional(TCNP) can help you with this. Ask for one at your favorite retail garden center or nursery.

I'm in need of some information on garden mums. For example, will they bloom again in the fall if they bloom in the spring? - M. E. E.

I have seen garden mums bloom both in the late spring and in the fall. Which varieties and types I could not say precisely.

To get a great fall show I would suggest that they not be allowed to bloom in the spring. I will cut mine back very severely somewhere around the first of April. Fertilizing is then done after pruning is completed by applying a premium quality slow release fertilizer if recommended according to a soil test. After growth reaches about four inches I will apply a two-inch layer of pine bark mulch all around the mums.

Water is applied as needed. Keep in mind that mums do not like poor drainage. If your bed is not well drained I suggest you lift the plants, improve the bed and reset the plants this month. You may also divide and set out new mum plants this month.

I know you see gardeners planting mums in late Summer-early Fall but they may be planted now also.

Keep the plants pinched back every few weeks, which encourages them to become multi-branched and bushy. If this is not done there will be fewer blooms in the fall and the plants will have a more open character. This tends to make a less attractive plant. I also find "garden mums" in general do better if they receive some shade from the hot West sun. Six-eight hours of full sun will be all that is needed for good growth and bloom. Watch for insects and if found be sure to get them under control as soon as possible with the appropriate product. I hope this helps. Remember ... "MUMS" the word!

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