

"Rejuvenating" Black Cloth

If your black cloth is as thin as most we have seen, your mums will flower this year as though you started covering them August 1. Perhaps you have planned to have your plants flower in early September by starting the black cloth treatment on July 1. These plants will flower as though the treatment were started later than July 1 if the cloth is thin.

The greater the amount of light that passes through the black cloth, the slower the buds are to form. Under thin cloth, crown buds often form and are followed by terminals. Sometimes flowers and vegetative shoots appear at the same time. All this is because some days were short enough for buds to form. Cloudy days along with black cloth, and followed by clear days causes some shoots to bud later than others.

You can reduce the amount of light that passes the cloth and have the mums flower more nearly on schedule by treating the cloth with a thin asphalt paint or similar material.

Vitaplastic black cloth preservative, produced for this purpose, increases the opaqueness of the cloth and permits you to use cloth that is too thin if not treated. We have tried spraying, brushing, and dipping the material. Dipping gets the most uniform distribution of the paint but is difficult to manipulate. We leave it to you to apply the material as you wish.

Allow at least five days for drying. In hot weather it will probably stick to the wires, and will also stick in the folds. It is not so good as prewar opaque cloth but it may help you over the "hump".

Vitaplastic black cloth preservative is distributed by Mr. X. S. Smith, American Associated Companies, Red Bank, New Jersey.

Dr. Kenneth Post