

Evaluation of Hydretain for Moisture Retention on Field Grown Mums

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Chrysanthemums are very popular landscape plants in the southeastern United States because of their flowers during the fall months. These plants are growing in the commercial nursery setting in various size containers. In the smaller container sizes, especially 6" and 8" containers, daily moisture requirements are difficult to maintain for growers due to the climate conditions. Previously, the soil humectant Hydretain has been shown to be effective in retaining moisture in container grown plants. The objective of this experiment was to evaluate the effectiveness of Hydretain.

The experiment was conducted at Baucom's Nursery in Summerville, SC in the Summer 2000. Chrysanthemum cultivars 'Raquel', 'Donna' and 'Yellow Urano' were selected for this trial. On 18 June 2000, twenty 6" and 8" containers of each variety were drenched with Hydretain at 2.0 ounces per gallon rate (1:64) until run-off. At thirty day intervals treated plants were compared to non-treated plants by four independent judges. On both thirty day intervals, 20 July and 17 August, the treated plants were evaluated as being "better in appearance" by all judges.

I regret the fact that I do not have pictures to support these results. The reason I don't have pictures is that a walk-in customer purchased all the plants before I had the opportunity to take them. I believe this incident supports our conclusion.