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Don't let the frost bite: Overwintering tips for your plants from British Garden Centres

Winter, with its biting winds and icy temperatures, can seem like a harsh enemy to gardeners. But with the right care and attention, your garden can thrive even during the coldest months. Overwintering, the process of protecting plants during the winter, is essential for ensuring their survival and promoting healthy growth in the spring. The team at British Garden Centres has some advice and tips to help you navigate the challenges of winter gardening and ensure your outdoor space is ready to thrive next year.

Preparing outdoor plants for winter

Taking a few proactive steps now can ensure your plants survive the cold months and emerge healthy and vibrant in the spring. Clear any fallen leaves, dead plants, and other debris that could harbour pests or diseases in your containers and borders. This will help prevent problems when warmer weather returns. Trim back perennial plants to encourage healthy growth in the coming season. Pruning also helps to remove any damaged or diseased parts.

A layer of mulch around your plants acts as an insulating blanket, helping to retain moisture and protect roots from freezing temperatures. You can use organic materials like straw, leaves, wood chips or horticulture fleece which is available from your local British Garden Centres store.

Consider moving tender plants indoors to a porch or greenhouse. If your plants are in containers, move to a sheltered location and reduce watering significantly during the winter months. If you can't bring them indoors, wrap the pots in insulation and move them to a sheltered location against a fence, hedge, or a row of tall plants.

While plants may need less water during the winter, it's important to avoid letting the soil dry out completely. Check the moisture level regularly and water as needed.

For a boost of nutrients, apply a slow-release fertiliser to your garden in late autumn or early winter. This will help to nourish your plants and prepare them for spring growth.

Houseplants over winter

Move plants closer to windowsills or under skylights to maximise sunlight exposure during the darker winter days. A couple of our key tips is to rotate pots regularly to ensure even growth and dust off leaves to improve light absorption. Even though the temperature is dropping, make sure you maintain a temperature of 12-18°C for your



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houseplants indoors. We recommend avoiding sudden temperature fluctuations and direct heat from radiators or heaters and cold drafts.

Overwatering is common in winter. Allow the compost to almost dry out between waterings. Water once a week, adjusting for succulents and cacti, which require less water. Increase humidity by grouping plants or misting them.

Your houseplants won't need feeding as much during winter due to slower plant growth. Regularly inspect plants for pests like aphids, scale insects, thrips, and mealybugs. Discard dead foliage as you see it to prevent disease of your beloved plant babies. You may need to repot your indoor plants as needed to accommodate growth so if this is the case and your plant needs a new home, move up the pot size by about 2 inches whilst its growth is slowing over winter.

Julian Palphramand, Head of Plants at British Garden Centres said: "Overwintering your garden plants requires a bit of extra effort, but the rewards are well worth it for the new year. By following our tips, you can help your plants survive the harsh winter months and emerge refreshed and ready to thrive in the spring. With a little care and attention, your garden can remain a vibrant and beautiful space year-round."

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WORD COUNT: 590

Notes to Editors: British Garden Centres (BGC) is the UK's largest family-owned garden centre group with 65 centres around the country. The group is owned and led by The Stubbs family, who also own and operate Woodthorpe Leisure Park in Lincolnshire.

BGC was launched in 1987 with the opening of Woodthorpe Garden Centre funded by brothers Charles and Robert Stubbs. Since 2018 it has expanded rapidly with the acquisition of 50 garden centres allowing it to grow from its heartland to the business it is now with 65 garden centres spread from Carmarthen to Ramsgate, Wimborne to East Durham.

The group has a team of 2,700 colleagues working across the garden centres, restaurants, 2 growing nurseries, 4 distribution centres and Woodthorpe Leisure Park and Woody's Restaurant & Bar.

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