



14th July 2025

Why feeding your plants is more important than ever this summer

As the gardening season hits its stride, feeding your plants now is more important than ever. At British Garden Centres, we know that giving your plants the right nutrients today will set them up for strong, healthy growth throughout the summer and beyond. Feeding your plants over summer goes a long way, so the team at British Garden Centres has put together some feeding advice to help your garden thrive.

Why feed your plants now?

Summer is the season when plants experience the most growth. Longer days mean more sunlight, which fuels photosynthesis and drives rapid development above and below ground. Plants rely on nutrients from the soil to fuel their development, but these essential elements become depleted quickly during the growing season. Watering, especially frequent in summer to combat heat, can wash away vital minerals, and this dry year has played havoc with the garden. Without replenishing these nutrients, plants may struggle to grow, flower, or produce fruit, and can become more vulnerable to pests, diseases, and environmental stresses in the long run.

Understanding plant feed and nutrition

Plant feeds contain three main nutrients: nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), and potassium (K). Nitrogen encourages leafy and plant growth, phosphorus supports strong roots and flower development, and potassium helps plants produce fruit and improves their resistance to stress.

Different plants have varying nutritional requirements; leafy vegetables benefit from higher nitrogen levels, while fruiting plants like tomatoes need potassium-rich feeds to develop healthy fruit. Acid loving plants such as rhododendrons require specialised feeds to maintain soil acidity and nutrient uptake.

Flowering plants like petunias, marigolds, roses, and dahlias do best when they get a balanced feed that has a bit of extra potassium. This helps them produce more flowers that are bright and healthy throughout the growing season. We recommend using a general-purpose fertiliser or one made especially to boost blooms to keep these plants looking their best. Herbs such as basil, parsley, thyme, and rosemary don't need much feeding, so treat lightly with a balanced mix.

Different types of feed

Liquid feeds are great for giving plants a quick boost because they're mixed with water and applied directly to the soil, where the roots can absorb nutrients almost straight away. This makes them perfect for encouraging fast



14th July 2025

growth, greener leaves, and longer-lasting flowers, especially if you use them once a week during the growing season. Liquid feeds work well for container plants, bedding, borders, window boxes, and even vegetables.

Granular feed is sprinkled in the soil and breaks down slowly, feeding your plants steadily over time, which means you only need to apply it about once a month. This makes granular feed ideal for busy gardeners or larger garden beds. **Ericaceous feed** is specially made for acid loving plants like rhododendrons, camellias, and azaleas. It helps keep the soil acidic and gives these plants the nutrients they need, so they stay healthy and produce more flowers. We advise using it every two weeks to keep plants at their best.

Tomato feed is designed for tomatoes and other fruiting crops, giving them plenty of nitrogen and a good balance of other nutrients to support leafy growth, strong stems, and lots of fruit. Apply it every one or two weeks for the best results. **Natural feeds** like seaweed, blood, fish, and bone meal are organic options that improve soil health and provide a steady supply of nutrients. Seaweed feed can help plants cope with cold weather and start growing from seed, while blood, fish, and bone meal add slow release nitrogen, phosphorus, and important trace minerals, supporting healthy, sustainable gardening.

How to feed your plants

Feeding your plants effectively is just as important as choosing the right feed. We recommend liquid feeds for containers and bedding plants because they are quickly absorbed, while granular or slow release feeds are ideal for borders and larger plants, offering a steady supply of nutrients over time.

Before feeding, water your plants lightly as this prepares the soil to absorb nutrients more efficiently. When applying liquid feed, dilute it according to the manufacturer's instructions and pour it directly onto the soil around the base of the plant, avoiding leaves to prevent scorch. For granular feeds, scatter the mix evenly around the plant's root zone and gently work it into the soil surface.

Avoid overfeeding, which can cause nutrient imbalances and harm your plants and follow the instructions on the product packaging carefully. We also advise you to feed your plants in the cooler parts of the day, such as early morning or late afternoon, to reduce evaporation and stress on the plants.

Julian Palphramand, Head of Plants at British Garden Centres, said: "Summer is a demanding time for plants. They are working hard to grow, flower, and fruit, and their nutrient needs increase accordingly. Feeding them now ensures they have the resources to thrive and remain resilient throughout the season."



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Notes to Editors:

About the business:

British Garden Centres (BGC) is the UK's largest family-owned garden centre group, with 73 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 1990 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 73 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, three growing nurseries, 4 distribution centres and Woodthorpe Leisure Park and Woody's Restaurant & Bar.

Social Media

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