



18th August 2025

British Garden Centres' top ten sun-loving plants to brighten your outdoors

As the UK experienced its fourth heatwave of the summer, with temperatures regularly climbing to 30°C, and one of the hottest and driest summer seasons on record, gardeners are looking for plants that prove themselves as reliable stars in hot temperatures and that can thrive in challenging conditions. The team at British Garden Centres has put together its top ten plant recommendations for sun drenched outdoor spaces.

Lavender: Few plants capture the essence of the UK summer quite like lavender. With its silvery foliage, delicate purple flower spikes, and unmistakable fragrance, lavender is a much loved English garden classic. Perfect for sunny borders, raised beds, or containers, lavender thrives best in well-drained soil and brings a sensory delight while drawing in bees, butterflies and other pollinating insects.

Sedum: This drought-tolerant succulent perennial is a true champion of the late summer garden. Its fleshy stems carry flat topped flower heads in shades of pink, red, or copper, which gradually deepen as the season progresses. Loved by pollinators for its seasonal nectar, sedum offers both attractive flowers and colour well into autumn.

Salvia: From purples to fiery reds, salvias provide a long lasting burst of colour this season. These sun loving perennials and half-hardy annuals bridge the gap between summer and autumn flowering seasons. Salvias are especially valued for their ability to keep blooming continuously when deadheaded regularly, and their aromatic foliage deters garden pests.

Dahlias: Now in their prime, dahlias are the stars of the sun drenched garden, rewarding gardeners with bold blooms in countless colours, from pastels to dark, rich shades. Ideal for cutting gardens, they need regular feeding and watering to maintain their spectacular floral displays, but their sunny disposition makes them perfect for bright borders over summer.

Roses: No summer British garden is truly complete without a rose. Whether climbing over an archway or filling a flower bed, roses require a sunny position and at least six hours of light daily to flourish, so they are perfect to have in your garden during summer.

Thyme: For gardeners who love to combine scent and grow their own, thyme is a must have for your kitchen garden. It loves sunny, free-draining conditions, and this hardy herb is ideal for garden paths and rockeries or a sunny kitchen windowsill. Its tiny flowers are irresistible to bees, making it as valuable to the ecosystem as it is to your summer planting.



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Eremurus: For those with space to showcase a statement plant that thrives in full sun, eremurus delivers vertical height to your border with its towering spires of flowers. Best suited to a south facing position, these sun lovers prefer sandy, well-drained soil and reward patience with a dazzling summer display.

Knautia macedonica: This beautiful full sun perennial produces rich crimson pincushion flowers over a long blooming season. Hardy and easy to grow, it provides both colour and movement in the garden while working hard to feed pollinators.

Euphorbia: With their striking lime green flower bracts, these are hardy perennials celebrated for bringing year-round interest to sunny gardens. These plants thrive best in full sun and well-drained soils, making them well suited to the increasingly warm and dry conditions seen in UK summers. Euphorbias are particularly valued for their drought tolerance, requiring minimal watering once established, which makes them both environmentally friendly and low maintenance.

Stipa: Also known as feather grass, stipa is a graceful ornamental grass that brings a sense of movement, texture, and lightness to sunny garden borders. It's fine, hair-like flower heads catch the light beautifully, from soft green in spring to golden as summer progresses, before taking on warm tones in autumn. Once established, it requires very little water or upkeep, making it a particularly valuable option for gardens facing increasingly hot and dry British summers.

Julian Palphramand, Head of Plants at British Garden Centres, said: "Our top ten recommendations have been chosen not only for their ornamental value, but also for their proven resilience in heat and prolonged sunlight. Late summer offers stable soil temperatures and plenty of light, giving these sun loving plants time to establish strong roots before winter."

ENDS:

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Notes to Editors: 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.

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