



3rd November 2025

Create the perfect winter garden with British Garden Centres

Winter does not have to mean a dull, lifeless garden, as we all need colour and warmth to cheer us up in the shorter, darker days. With the right plants and a little care, you can enjoy a beautiful outdoor space full of colour and interest throughout the winter months. British Garden Centres offer a wide range of winter-ready plants that brighten borders and pots throughout the cold months, along with helpful advice on protecting garden furniture from harsh weather to make sure your garden is still at its best.

Colourful plants that shine in winter

Even when summer flowers have faded, you can still find plenty of plants that provide colour, texture, and shape in the winter garden. One of the best known winter blooms is the **hellebore**, also called the Christmas rose. Hellebores are hardy perennials that come into life from late December, producing delicate flowers in white, pink, cream, and sometimes even deep plum shades. Hellebores grow well in shady or semi-shady spots, making them perfect under trees or beside pathways. Planting several together creates lovely swathes of winter colour.

Heathers are another fantastic choice for winter colour and structure, when other plants are dormant. Winter heather blooms from autumn to spring, bringing cheerful pink, white or purple flowers. Its low-growing habit is ideal for brightening bare patches, containers or edging borders. Heathers also support important pollinators by providing nectar when few other plants are flowering.

You can also brighten up shady corners and doorways with **cyclamen**, which boast small, butterfly-shaped flowers in shades of magenta, pink, red and white. Their marbled leaves add interest even when not in flower, and they thrive in frost-free spots.

Mahonia is another favourite with its bold evergreen spiky, glossy leaves and fragrant yellow flower clusters that appear from late autumn. These clusters attract bees, as well as providing a lovely scent. Its dark purple berries add colour in winter, and are widely available and easy to grow.

For evergreen foliage and berries, **Skimmia** and **Sarcococca** are top picks. *Skimmia japonica* produces glossy, dark leaves alongside groups of red berries that last through winter. The flowers have a delicate scent, and varieties like 'Rubella' are especially popular. *Sarcococca* or sweet box is a low-growing shrub with glossy leaves and very fragrant, creamy white flowers in late winter. The scent is strongest on mild days, so position it where you can enjoy it close up, like by the front door or lining pathways.



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Don't overlook the beauty of hardy evergreen **ferns** in winter. Ferns such as *Polystichum setiferum* keep their lush, feathery fronds throughout the colder months and add soft texture and greenery to shaded parts of the garden. Combine them with other colourful foliage plants like **Heuchera and ornamental grasses** for depth and seasonal interest.

Other winter heroes to consider include **dogwoods** with striking red stems, **viburnums** for early flowers and berries, and **Nandina domestica** with glowing red foliage in frost.

Preparing your garden furniture for winter

A beautiful winter garden isn't just about plants. Protecting your garden furniture during the colder months is essential for keeping it in good condition and making it a place to sit and relax for years to come.

Start by cleaning your furniture with warm, soapy water to remove dirt, leaves and debris. This helps prevent mould and keeps the surfaces clean before storage or covering. Avoid harsh chemicals, especially on delicate surfaces like wood or rattan.

Next, inspect your furniture for any damage. Tighten loose screws, repair cracks or scratches, and sand down rough patches on wooden furniture. Giving wooden pieces a coat of sealant or wood oil provides extra protection against damp and frost. Metal furniture will benefit from a rustproof paint or touch-up where needed.

Cover your furniture with waterproof, breathable covers that allow moisture to escape but keep rain and snow off. Secure covers well to prevent wind damage. If you have cushions or fabrics, remove them and store inside in a dry place until spring. This prevents soggy and mildew.

If you have space, storing your furniture indoors or in a shed is the best protection from winter weather. If not, grouping your furniture in a sheltered spot and using covers will still make a big difference.

Remember to dry all furniture thoroughly before covering or storing it to avoid moisture damage. Check on your furniture occasionally throughout winter, especially after storms, to adjust covers and look for any new issues.

Julian Palphramand, Head of Plants at British Garden Centres, said: "Winter is a great time to enjoy your garden and with the right plants and a bit of care, it can still look colourful and inviting all through the colder months. Small efforts now, like planting winter flowering plants and protecting your furniture, make a big difference. We're here to help gardeners of all levels create a warm and welcoming outdoor space, whatever the season."



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ENDS:

WORD COUNT: 828

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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