



19th January 2026

Add a splash of winter colour to your garden with British Garden Centres

January may be cold and quiet, but your garden doesn't have to be. Even at this time of year, there's plenty of life waiting to burst through the frost. With a bit of planning, you can fill your outdoor space with colour, scent and texture that will keep it cheerful right through winter into early spring. Whether it's a few pots by the front door or a full border refresh, there is plenty you can plant now that will thrive in the cold, and British Garden Centres' team of experts has chosen their top picks for winter colour and interest.

Winter colour

Some plants are just made for winter. **Hellebores**, often called Christmas or Lenten roses, are favourites for good reason. Their simple, nodding flowers appear from December to March and come in soft shades of pink, cream, white and plum. They're happiest in a sheltered, shady spot and look beautiful planted under deciduous trees alongside **Cyclamen coum**. Cyclamen's deep pink, red or white cup-shaped blooms and patterned leaves bring a pop of colour at ground level when most other plants are fast asleep.

For easy colour, **pansies and violas** never fail to perform as they bounce back after frost, flower for months, and add instant cheer to patios and containers. Mix them with vinca (**also known as periwinkle**) for trailing greenery and flashes of violet-blue or white flowers that tumble neatly over pot edges.

Winter gardens also need structure, and that's where **conifers** come in. Their evergreen shapes give depth to your planting and provide contrast to flowering plants. Choose a mix of forms and shades or a compact conifer for pots that will stay neat all year. Pair them with **Skimmia japonica**, which adds glossy leaves, bright berries and fragrant spring buds, with this plant keeping its form through even the harshest weather.

One of the loveliest winter shrubs is **Camellia**, which rewards a little care with stunning blooms in red, pink or white. The trick is to plant it in slightly acidic soil and in a sheltered spot, away from strong morning sun that can scorch frosted buds. When looked after, camellias flower year after year and bring a real sense of luxury to the garden.

Then there's **Witch hazel (Hamamelis)**, a plant that dazzles with spidery blooms in russet, copper and bright gold. Its sweet, spicy scent is unmistakable, especially when paired with the rich perfume of **Daphne or Sarcococca (sweet**



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box). Both are small, hardy shrubs that stay evergreen and release wonderful fragrance on mild winter days. Plant them by a doorway or along a path, where their scent can stop you in your tracks.

Hardy plants that beat the cold

Some plants simply thrive in low temperatures. **Euonymus, Box (Buxus) and Holly (Ilex)** keep their colour through frost and snow and add reliable structure to borders and hedges. To liven up your winter palette, add **Cornus** (dogwood) with its striking bare red or golden stems, which glow when the light catches them.

Bergenia, known as elephant's ears, brings toughness and charm to winter gardens with leaves that turn bronze and purple in the cold, topped by clusters of pink flowers. **Heather (Erica carnea)** is another hardworking option that covers the ground with bright, pollen-rich blooms lasting through winter. Both are great for front borders and rock gardens, and they'll help feed bees emerging on mild February days.

If your space is small, try mixed displays in tubs or troughs. **Use hellebores, skimmia and small conifers** for height and structure, then add **vinca or violas** to soften the edges. Even one or two containers beside your front door can make a huge difference. **For walls or trellises, winter jasmine** produces cheerful yellow flowers that brighten up the bare stems and make for a welcome sight when everything else is waiting for spring.

Julian Palphramand, Head of Plants at British Garden Centres, said: "Gardening in winter isn't just about keeping things looking tidy, it's about creating small moments of colour and joy when you need them most. People often think gardens have to sleep through winter, but there's so much that can bring colour and life at this time of year. Simple combinations of evergreens, berries and winter flowers can completely transform your space. With a few thoughtful additions, your outside space can stay lively, colourful and welcoming right through till spring."

Whether you're adding a few pots or planning a whole new border, our garden centres are full of inspiration and friendly advice to help you make the most of winter gardening.

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Notes to Editors:

About the business:



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British Garden Centres (BGC) is the UK's largest family-owned garden centre group with 74 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 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 74 garden centres spread from Carmarthen to Ramsgate, Wimborne to East Durham. The group has a team of 3500 colleagues working across the garden centres, restaurants, 2 growing nurseries, 4 distribution centres, Woodthorpe Leisure Park, and Woody's Restaurant & Bar.

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