



4<sup>th</sup> May 2026

## **British Garden Centres' beginner's guide to deadheading your plants**

**It takes a few minutes, costs nothing, and can keep your garden in full bloom well into autumn. As part of its Make it Bloom campaign, British Garden Centres is sharing everything new gardeners need to know about deadheading. This simple gardening habit makes a surprisingly big difference to your plants and outdoor space.**

### **What is deadheading?**

Most people walk past spent flowers without giving them a second thought. A browning rose, a drooping dahlia, a petunia that's clearly had its moment. But those faded blooms are actually costing you colour and longer flowering times, and the fix couldn't be simpler. Deadheading is simply removing spent flower heads before they set seed and is one of the most effective things you can do for your plant. When a bloom dies, the plant reads this as a signal to stop producing flowers and start putting its energy into making seeds instead. Remove that dead flower, and the plant carries on blooming, giving you colour and scent well into the summer months and beyond.

### **How to do it**

You don't need any special tools or training to deadhead plants. Find a flower that's fading or browning at the edges, then pinch the stem just below the bloom and snap it cleanly away. The key is to remove the whole flower head, not just the petals. Leaving the base behind still allows seed development to begin, which is exactly what you're trying to prevent.

For plants with tougher or woodier stems, roses and dahlias, for example, it's worth using a clean pair of secateurs. Cut at a slight angle just above a leaf joint or an outward-facing bud. This encourages the plant to grow outwards rather than inwards, which is better for air circulation and overall shape.

### **When and how often to deadhead**

Deadheading works best when you do it regularly rather than an occasional blitz. A quick check every week or two during the growing season is all it takes, and the more consistently you do it, the longer and more generously your plants will flower.

Roses, sweet peas, geraniums, marigolds, pansies, and dahlias all respond well to regular deadheading and will often reward you with a second or even third flush of blooms. Sweet peas are perhaps the most demanding, so make sure



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you don't allow a few pods to develop, as they'll wind down their flowering almost immediately. Deadheading regularly, and they'll keep going for months.

Lavender doesn't need deadheading in the traditional sense, but giving the spent flower spikes a light trim after the first flush encourages a second flowering and keeps the plant looking full rather than straggly.

### **When to leave alone**

Not everything benefits from deadheading, and it's worth knowing what to leave. Ornamental grasses, sedums, and many shrubs develop seed heads that look beautiful through autumn and winter, and they also provide an important food source for birds and beneficial insects.

Alliums are another good example of flowers not to deadhead. The architectural spherical heads look stunning as they dry, and birds like goldfinches will work through them as food. Teasels are similar and irresistible to birds after they fade in naturalistic planting schemes. Echinacea is another one to leave alone, as the spiky central cones persist well into winter and are regularly visited by birds looking for seeds.

Hydrangeas are worth leaving too, as their dried flower heads provide a degree of frost protection for the buds forming beneath, so it's better to leave them until spring rather than deadhead them in autumn. Foxgloves and aquilegias are a different case as these are biennials or short-lived perennials that rely on self-seeding to keep coming back. Deadhead them, and you'll have a great display this year; leave them, and you'll have one next year too.

**Julian Palphramand, Head of Plants at British Garden Centres**, said: "Deadheading is one of those little jobs that feels almost too simple to be worth doing until you see the results. Gardens that get this kind of regular attention just look different: fuller, more generous, more alive. That's what Make it Bloom is really about, simple with no complicated techniques or expensive kit, just practical things that actually work for gardeners of all levels."

Visit <https://www.britishgardencentres.com/make-it-bloom/> for more information and more inspiring gardening tips.



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**ENDS**

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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 79 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 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 79 garden centres spread from Carmarthen to Ramsgate, Wimborne to East Durham.

The group has a team of 3,200 colleagues working across the garden centres, restaurants, 2 growing nurseries, 4 distribution centres, Woodthorpe Leisure Park, and Woody's Restaurant & Bar.

**Social Media**

Facebook: British Garden Centres

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Website: [www.britishgardencentres.com](http://www.britishgardencentres.com)

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