



** This news release from K-State Research and Extension is available online at <https://ksre-learn.com/deadhead-plants-for-growth>

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Deadheading gives plants new life

K-State horticulture expert lists plants that benefit from a little pinching

K-State Research and Extension news service

MANHATTAN, Kan. -- It may feel a bit gloomy to pick off fading flowers from the yard's plants. But Kansas State University horticulture expert Cynthia Domenghini said you're actually setting plants up for success by pinching off spent flowers, a process called deadheading.

"Some plants will bloom more profusely if the old, spent flowers are removed," Domenghini said. "Annuals, especially, focus their energy on seed production to ensure that the species survives. If you remove the old flowers, the energy normally used to produce seed is now available to produce more flowers."

Normally, gardeners can deadhead flowers by simply pinching them off with a thumb and finger, but some tougher stems may require scissors or pruning shears.

Domenghini said some perennials also benefit from deadheading, which essentially extends the blooming season by encouraging an additional burst of flowers. But in the case of perennials, she said: "Some gardeners actually enjoy the look of spent flowers, such as sedum or purple coneflower. And the seed produced can be a good food source for birds."

Some of the plants that increase blooms in response to deadheading include:

- Hard geraniums.
- Coreopsis.
- Petunias.
- Marigolds.
- Snapdragons.
- Begonias.
- Roses.
- Campanulas.
- Blanket flowers.
- Delphiniums.
- Zinnias.
- Sweet peas.

- Salvia.
- Scabiosa.
- Annual heliotrope.
- Geraniums (Pelargonium).
- Yarrow.

Other plants that do not need to be deadheaded include sedum (Autumn Joy), melampodium, impatiens, most flowering vines, Lythrum, periwinkle (Catharanthus) and wishbone flower (Torenia).

Domenghini and her colleagues in K-State's Department of Horticulture and Natural Resources produce a weekly [Horticulture Newsletter](#) with tips for maintaining home landscapes and gardens. The newsletter is available to view online or can be delivered by email each week.

Interested persons can subscribe to the newsletter, as well as submit their garden and yard-related questions, by sending email to Domenghini at Cdom@ksu.edu, or contact your [local K-State Research and Extension office](#).

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FOR PRINT PUBLICATIONS: Links used in this story

K-State Horticulture Newsletter, <https://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/horticulture-resource-center/horticulture-newsletter/>

K-State Research and Extension local offices, <https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/about/statewide-locations.html>

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