

News Column for use the week of 5/16/2022  
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### **Deadheading Annual and Perennial Flowers**

Are you looking for a way to increase the number of flowers you get on your plants? Are you tired of the one-and-done flowers? Have you ever tried deadheading your plants? Some plants will bloom more profusely if the old, spent flowers are removed. This is a process called deadheading.

Annual plants especially will focus their energy on seed production after they have flowered once instead of focusing on producing more flowers. If you remove old flowers, the energy normally used to produce seeds will be used to produce more flowers.

Perennial flowers can also benefit from deadheading and will increase the length of the blooming season. However, some gardeners enjoy the look of spent flowers of perennials such as sedum or purple coneflower. The seed produced is a good food source for birds.

Deadheading will not help all plants produce another round of flowers. Some plants that don't produce flowers again are 'Autumn Joy' sedum, impatiens, most flowering vines, and periwinkle. These plants only produce one round of flowers whether you deadhead them or not. So it's totally up to you as the gardener whether you like the look of the spent blooms or if you'd rather take them off.

Plants that do increase bloom production in response to deadheading include geraniums, petunias, marigolds, snapdragons, roses, blanket flowers, and zinnias. These are just a few in a long list of annual and perennial flowers that will bloom repeatedly if you deadhead them.

Deadheading is easily accomplished and doesn't take much time to complete. With some plants, pinching the bloom between a thumb and finger will pop off the spent blooms. Others will be a bit tougher and will need pruning shears to remove the blooms. Deadheading can increase the length of the gardening season, but it is up to you the gardener whether you choose to deadhead your plants. If you have any questions feel free to stop by or contact me in the Washington office, at 785-325-2121 or [khatesohl@ksu.edu](mailto:khatesohl@ksu.edu).