



Petite Gardenscapes

Sensible designs for the weekend gardener

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Special Interest Articles:

- Pinching and deadheading
- Choosing a plant
- Container gardens



Timely Tip:
Cut daffodils must have their own vase- they will kill other flowers sharing their vase

Regular Features:

- Plant disorder of the month
- Bulb of the month
- Timely Tip

Questions or comment? Contact Pat at pbaganz@voyager.net or 262-353-6555

To pinch or not to pinch..

To know whether to pinch or deadhead a plant, you have to know that a plant's main goal in life is to produce seed. When a flower (containing those seeds)is removed from the plant, that plant thinks to itself "Self, you **gotta** make another flower,gotta make....!"

Deadheading

Is removing the tired-looking blossom from a plant. When a plant has produced all the flowers it has energy for, it stops making flowers and this means no more seeds, either. Annuals generally will continue to bloom all season until frost kills them. Perennials, however, usually have a shorter bloom time, so the question is: will deadheading produce more flowering in a perennial.

Pinching back

Is removing a part of the growing tip of a stem. The purpose is to make the stem develop more side shoots, which makes the plant bushier, and

shorter, but more branches also produce more flowers.

How to pinch/deadhead

Having defined these two gardening processes, I should mention **how** to deadhead. If the stem of the plant is soft, the best way is to pinch off the spent bloom, using your fingertips, down to another stem (you don't want to leave bare stems poking out, do you?) When pinching a stem back, remove the end of the stem, preferably back to a place where another side stem is growing.

If you have woody stems that you can't pinch with your fingers, use a loppers or scissors to save your hands.

Being selective

Should you deadhead every spent flower? Annuals and perennials are fine, but if you want to collect seeds to start more plants, leave the last blooms on at the end of their season, let them dry up and then harvest them by putting them into an

envelope and making sure the seeds are dry.

If you're growing herbs and vegetables, there is another set of rules:

Don't deadhead tomato flowers. You will lose the baby tomato!

Do deadhead cabbage, lettuce, spinach and herb flowers, because you want the plant's energy directed to tender foliage, not seeds (which is called bolting). However, when the temperatures get warm, the plant really can't help itself. Sometimes you're better off letting them go to seed and planting a new set of seeds.

Now, finally, which plants will benefit by pinching back and deadheading ? The lists on the next page shows plants that will benefit from deadheading and produce more flowers.

You will also see which flowers will become more bushy or a more pleasing shape by judicious pinching.



Plants to deadhead and pinch back

Botanic/Common Names	Rebloom?	Botanic/Common Names	Rebloom?
Astillbe	No	Leucanthemum/Shasta Daisy	Yes
Mondarda /Bee Balm	Yes	Iris siberica/Siberian Iris	No
Gallardia/Blanket Flower	Yes	Veronica spicata/Speedwell	Yes
Lobelia/Cardinal Flower	Yes	Tradescantia/Spiderwort	Yes
Aquilegia/Columbine	Yes	Stokesia/Stoke's Aster	Yes
Heuchera/Coral Bells	Yes	Phlox/Tall garden phlox	No
Hemerocallis/Daylily	Yes	Sedum/Tall sedum	No
Delphinium	Yes	Coreopsis/Threadleaf.	Yes
Dianthus /Pinks	No	Coreopsis/Tickseed	Yes
Dicentra/Bleeding Heart	Yes	Chelone /Turtlehead	No
Tiarella/Foamflower	Yes	Geranium/Hardy Geran.	Yes
Solidago/Goldenrod	Yes	Digitalis/Foxglove	Yes
Lavendula/Lavender	Yes	Lilium/Lily	No
Lupinus/Lupine	Yes	Aconitum/Monkshood	Yes
Echinacea/Coneflower	Yes	Salvia	Yes

Plants to pinch back

Annual coleus, asters, petunias, zinnias and herbs should be pinched back when they are 4-6 inches high.

Chrysanthemums , one of our most important fall blooming plants, need to be pinched back earlier than that, before flower buds form, or you will not have any flowers in the fall.

Monarda, tall garden phlox, and asters can be pinched back ½ of their height in the front for a tiered effect.

Malva should be pinched back first in May and again in June to keep this plant from becoming leggy

How to buy the perfect plant

I know you're planning a trip to Steins or Minors Garden Center: you're a gardener and you want to try some of the plants last month.

Here are a few tricks from Fine Gardening magazine to help you get a plant that will perform beautifully for you, assuming you have a good spot for it. While you're at the nursery,

here are some points to consider:

**** Buds are best:** buy a plant with buds, not one that's in full flower. Your plant will suffer less transplant shock, and you'll enjoy blooms for a longer time.

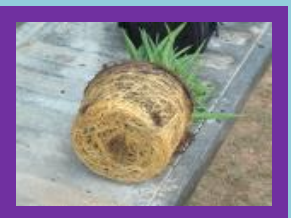
****Check the roots:** (see photo at right) A plant that is root bound in the pot isn't healthy. You want a plant that have white, new roots.

**** Look at the leaves:**

You don't want to buy a plant with powdery mildew, but don't confuse it with fertilizer residue. Powdery mildew is unsightly and harms the plant; fertilizer residue washes off.

**** Fullness beats height**

A small, full plant is often a better purchase than a taller plant which can be spindly and have shallow or weak root systems.



Two no-nos: a rootbound plant and powdery mildew





Container Gardens by Elizabeth O'Connell



"Almost any herb or vegetable can be successfully grown in a container"-
Elizabeth O'Connell



*Elizabeth O'Connell,
monthly contributor and
Ozaukee Gardener
columnist for the
Ozaukee Press*

The newest gardening trend is home grown food. While seed companies report record sales, homeowners everywhere are looking for places to start new gardens. For many the best available spot is in an attractive container or two on a sunny patio, deck, or balcony.

Containers filled with summer flowers are familiar sights but they're also ideal for growing herbs, vegetables and even fruit, especially for novice gardeners. Containers are compact enough to easily tend, they can be moved to wherever growing conditions are perfect, and the soil never needs improvement.

There are a few fundamentals for successful container gardening. First, choose a container large enough for your crop. Plants like lettuces and greens can grow in shallow containers but peppers, cucumbers, eggplants and herbs will need deeper pots. Large plants like tomatoes, especially those requiring supports, will do better in larger, heavier pots which are less likely to blow over in the wind. Large containers are also perfect for small shrubs like

blueberries and miniature trees such as figs.

Don't fill your container with soil from the garden but invest in soilless mix. This is a blend of materials that will absorb moisture but provide proper drainage in a container. The mix can be supplemented with compost or additions like composted manure or commercial fertilizer to feed the plants. Never use fresh manure of any kind directly on plants.

To insure that excess water can drain from the pot, elevate it on a few bathroom tiles, pot feet or a low stand. These will also protect decks and patios from staining. It's also a good idea to put extremely large or heavy containers on a wheeled base in case they have to be moved.

Add the soilless mix to the container in layers and moisten each addition thoroughly to settle the material. This guarantees the pot is properly filled and the plants will stay at the level they were when originally planted.

Plants in containers are growing in restricted areas so they'll need to be watered more frequently than plants in garden soil. Container moisture should be

checked daily and the containers may be mulched to help retain moisture.

Gardeners with extensive container gardens may want to install watering systems. These consist of tubing with drip emitters running from pot to pot. Timers, available at the hardware store, can be installed at the hose connection to turn the system on and off as needed.

Almost any herb or vegetable can be successfully grown in a container. But as the popularity of container growing has increased, new vegetable varieties have been developed, especially for pot culture. These include determinate versions of vining plants like tomatoes, beans and squash as well as shorter carrots and smaller beets and onions.

Here are some vegetables well suited to container gardens:
Nantes, Short and Sweet or Thumbelina carrots
Cherry Belle Radish
Salad Bush or
Spacemaster Cucumbers
Morden Midget Eggplant
Patio, Tiny Tim or Sundrop Tomato
Leaf Lettuce like Red Sails, Salad Bowl or Black-seeded Simpson.



This month's disorder is **Damping Off Disease**, which affects newly planted seedlings. It's caused by soil-borne fungi, including *Pytophthora*, *Pythium* and *Rhizocotonia* species which invade and kill the tender bedding plants and seedlings. Seedlings either fail to emerge after germination or they fall over, rot and die soon after germination. You might also see a furry fungal growth spreading over the dying seedlings.

Prevention includes using **sterilized containers and seed-starter mix**. Use seed

that's been treated with a fungicide. Drench seedlings with a **copper-based fungicide** as soon as they emerge.

Control of Damping Off disease also involves drenching seedlings and the seed trays with a copper-based fungicide,, such as Liquid Copper Fungicide made by Natural Guard.



www.icrisat.org
Information courtesy of:
"What's Wrong with my plant? "
Steven Bradley

BULB OF THE MONTH

May's bulb is the *Hyacinthoides hispanica*, Spanish Bluebell, which is also a Pinkbell or Whitebell; just kidding. It's still a bluebell, but comes in three colors. It loves part shade and naturalizes under trees, but will grow in full sun and full shade. These are May-blooming bulbs, and need to be planted in the fall.



