

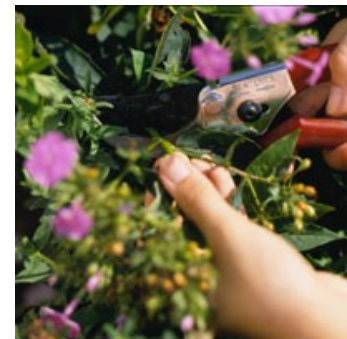
Deadheading

Deadheading, despite the ominous sound, is an essential function of removing spent flowers to keep the plant (and your garden) tidy, and to ensure maximum bloom productivity. If the flowers stay on the plant and become brown and unattractive, it's time to deadhead!

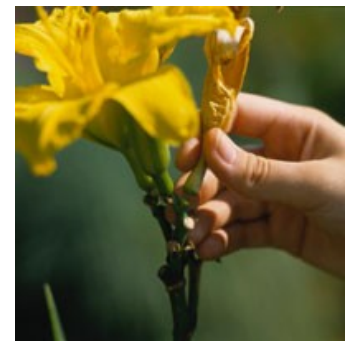
PINCH: You don't need scissors to deadhead more herbaceous (non-woody) flowers. Just use your thumb and forefinger to pinch off old blooms, especially on compact plants that feature many flowers like mums, impatiens, marigold, pansy, petunia, viola, dianthus, poppy, cosmos, and columbine. Pinch off faded flowers about a 1/4" inch above new buds



SNIP: Use sharp scissors or clippers to get through the woody stem. Use hand pruners or a pair of sharp scissors to deadhead flowers with tougher, almost woody stems like peony, aster, coneflower (Echinacea spp.), coreopsis, hosta, zinnia, lily, and Rudbeckia. Cut off the spent flowers 1/4" above the next bud.



SNAP: Breaking off the flower where the stem meets the stalk is the way to deadhead long-stem flowers that grow in a succession of blooms on a single stalk like daylilies, iris, gladiola. Pull down gently on the spent flower until it cleanly snaps off.





Shrubby Plants with Many Small Flowers

These include coreopsis, feverfew, golden marguerites, lobelia, sweet alyssum, smaller mums, potentilla, flax, asters, gaillardia, and ageratum. Trimming one flower at a time is too time consuming, so shear off old blooms with grass shears. Get as much of the flower stalk as possible. Avoid buds, but don't worry about taking a little foliage off with the blooms -- it'll grow back.



Shrubby Plants with Large Flowers

These include large marigolds, summer phlox, astilbe, peonies, purple coneflowers, black-eyed susans, daisies, annual and perennial salvia, petunias, and zinnias. With hand pruning shears (also known as secateurs or pruning snips), cut off each flower individually, getting enough of the stalk so it doesn't protrude awkwardly. It's OK (and in the case of leggy plants, such as petunias, desirable) to take off a bit of the foliage, too.



Roses

Not to be confused with pruning, deadheading roses means taking out only the minimum amount of stem to remove the flower. Make the cut at a 45-degree angle that slopes down toward the center of the rosebush. The cut should be located on a spot 1) that occurs after the first pair of leaves and 2) is directly above an outward-facing stem, that is, a stem that points away from the plant's center.



Long Stem Flowers on Tall Stalks

These include daylilies, delphinium, foxgloves, hostas, tulips, daffodils, Oriental poppies, and irises. Simply cut back each flower with hand pruning shears as close as possible to the spot where the stalk meets the leaves. Cut the faded flower spikes to encourage a second flush of bloom on veronica, salvia, yarrow, geranium, and roses.

