

Bluestem Breezes  
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## **Deadheading Flowers**

Timely spring rains were so beneficial for our plants this year. My flower gardens were on auto-pilot most of the late summer in 2015. Fortunately, frequent rains earlier this spring have masked my negligence and the beds are now phenomenal!

To keep my flowers blooming, a technique called deadheading is helpful. Here are details from K-State Specialist Ward Upham:

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

Perennials can also benefit by lengthening the blooming season. However, some gardeners enjoy the look of spent flowers of perennials such as sedum or purple coneflower. Also, the seed produced can be a good food source for birds.

Not all plants need to be deadheaded, including sedum 'Autumn Joy', melampodium, impatiens, most flowering vines, periwinkle (*Catharanthus*), and wishbone flower (*Torenia*).

Those that do increase bloom in response to deadheading include hardy geraniums, coreopsis, petunias, marigolds, snapdragons, begonias, roses, campanulas, blanket flowers, delphiniums, zinnias, sweet peas, salvia, scabiosa, annual heliotrope, geraniums (*Pelargonium*), and yarrow.

Deadheading is easily accomplished by removing spent flowers. With some plants, pinching between a thumb and finger can do this, but tough, wiry stems will require a scissors or pruning shears.

For additional information, visit the Extension Office (215 Kansas, Courthouse, Alma; [kamayer@ksu.edu](mailto:kamayer@ksu.edu); 765-3821). For Bluestem Breezes archives, check out [wabaunsee.ksu.edu](http://wabaunsee.ksu.edu).