

Date: August 2, 2006
Release: Home Gardening
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Get More Flowers by Deadheading

Deadheading sounds like a Rock-n-Roll term, but it can really make your garden “Rock.” Deadheading in the garden is the removal of spent flower heads to give you more flowers to enjoy. I know it is hot, but you should at least get out of the air conditioning in the late evenings and deadhead your flowers, shrubs, and trees to revitalize you and your yard.

Plants live to reproduce. The end result of flowering is the seed produced for the next crop of flowers. Once seed is produced many plants, kind of give up on producing flowers since their main reason for living (reproduction) is complete. After the removal of the spent flowers or seedheads by deadheading, plants revert to the reproductive mode and start flowering again.

Deadheading rejuvenates flowering on many types of plants including annuals, perennials, shrubs and trees. Spent flowers can be removed anytime even before they have gone to seed. However, during the mid-summer many spring flowers are gone to seed and need to be removed to allow for a flush of flowers in the fall. This is particularly true with crepe myrtles. Crepe myrtles flower on new growth. Cutting off the heavy seedheads will reduce the weight at the end of the branches, allow the branches to spring upwards, encourage new growth, and cause more flowering.

Deadheading now will ensure more beautiful flowers in the fall. This will make our return to the garden from our air conditioned, summertime hibernation more enjoyable. After the heat has gone and the crispness of fall is in the air, even the most heat stressed northerner will agree that “It is wonderful gardening in the south.”

With the heat, gardeners have retreated indoors and have a tendency of doing very little in the summer or what I call “People Deadheading.” To keep up with gardening trends, you should, at least watch both of our Emmy Award winning gardening programs Making-It-Grow (MIG) and Down Home with Tony and Amanda. MIG can be seen at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday nights on regular ETV. However, at present Down Home can be seen on digital cable and some satellite systems on the SC Channel (channel 802 on Time Warner Cable). Both can be seen at anytime on www.mig.org

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