



Deadheading

Description of activity	PAL
Removing spent flower heads to promote more flowering	Suitable for all stages of dementia
Time of Year	Time needed to complete activity
March to November in flower beds, outdoor pots and indoor pots.	Anything between 15 minutes and an hour.

Preparation

1. Assess the weather, is it too bad that people will not want to go out? Refer to weather contingency.
2. Ask about people's experiences of dead heading, their memories and plants they particularly enjoy deadheading.

Tools and materials

1. Scissors/ secateurs



2. Bucket



3. Gloves if desired but not necessary



What to do

1. Identify the spent flower heads



2. Take the secateurs to cut to the nearest leaf bud below the flower



3. Pop spent flower in the bucket

4. Empty on the compost heap or in the municipal green waste

This activity requires little preparation, equipment or tidy up time, it can be picked up and dropped with ease and people can do as much or as little as they like in that moment. Many people, gardeners or not will have experience of deadheading, often as children Granny would say go out and dead head the marigolds or the roses. It can be a quiet and meditative task and has immediate aesthetic benefits. It promotes continued flowering keeping the plants paying their dues to the garden.

Adaptations and variations

Before identifying spent flower heads, assess whether the person being supported would like / be able to walk / or wheel around the garden and get to the more challenging plants inside the beds. Or whether they would rather remain close to the building or indeed seated at a table and carry out one step of the process with potted plants.

For people with reduced cognitive capacity, simply experiencing feeling or seeing flowers thriving and going brown has value. Flowering plants can be brought to the person for them to experience in any way they like. Talk about the look of the flowers, the colours and number of petals on them.

After dead heading using consider adding fertiliser on the soil around the base of the plant. This will give the plant a boost to support more flowering.

Weather contingency

Flower pots can be brought indoors if the weather is poor, and equally indoor plants on windowsills can usually do with a little attention, removing brown leaves for example.