



No gardener wants to see their flowers succumb to the summer heat. Fortunately, there are many ways to help flowers survive heat waves.

Petal power

How to help flowers withstand heat waves

Heat waves are an inevitable part of summer in many places across the globe. While humans

can escape indoors to air conditioned rooms when heat waves hit full swing, flowers planted around a property have no such

luxury, putting their survival in jeopardy whenever the mercury rises to especially steamy heights. Wilted flowers that

have succumbed to the summer sun are a sight many gardening enthusiasts can recognize. But there are ways to keep flowers safe and vibrant during periods of extreme heat.

- **Water at the appropriate times of day.** The National Gardening Association

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notes that it's best to water in the early morning and evening because less water will be lost to evaporation during these times of day than during the afternoon, when temperatures tend to be at their hottest.

- **Choose the right watering method.** It's not just when but

Did you know?

One oft-shared piece of pruning advice is that covering a newly pruned area with tar, paint or varnish can inhibit the fungal organisms that will get into the new cut, leading to a diseased tree, shrub or plant. This myth has been circulating for some time, according to the experts at Fine Gardening. Unfortunately, there is no surefire way to prevent microscopic organisms from infiltrating a new cut. The application of a wound dressing may even contribute to faster decay of heartwood. That's because the tar or paint will keep moisture in the new cut, which helps fungus and other microorganisms grow. Instead of dressing wounds, read up on proper ways to prune and let plants employ their own natural defenses to heal and prevent decay.

also how you water that can affect flowers during summer heat waves. Aboveground sprinklers might be great for lawns, but the NGA notes that such sprinklers can encourage the spread of disease on certain plants, including roses. Many gardening professionals recommend soaker hoses when watering flowers because they promote deep watering that can help the plants withstand the summer heat. If you must use an overheard watering system, set the timer so plants are watered in early in the morning or evening.

- **Routinely check the soil moisture.** Soil moisture can help gardeners determine if their flowers have enough water to withstand the heat. The NGA advises gardeners to dig a 12-inch deep wedge of soil from their gardens to determine its moisture levels. If the top six inches of the soil is dry, water. If that area is still wet

or moist, the plants have enough moisture to withstand the heat. Check these moisture levels more frequently during heat waves than other times of year.

- **Avoid overwatering.** Novice gardeners may be tempted to water more frequently when they see wilted leaves on their flowers. But wilted leaves are not necessarily indicative of suffering plants. Plants release moisture to protect themselves from excessive heat, and that release of moisture can cause leaves to wilt as the plants try to protect themselves by providing less surface area that can be exposed to the sun. So long as soil moisture levels are healthy, the flowers should be fine, even if their leaves have wilted.

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