

House sellers stripping gardens bare before new owners have chance to move in so they can save their beloved plants

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- Researchers have seen a huge increase in 'garden grabbing'
- They load their favourite plants in removal vans alongside furniture
- Previous owners hate parting with specimens they have nurtured for years

Housebuyers who fall in love with the garden at their new address had better beware - chances are it could be stripped bare before they move in.

And it's not thieves to blame but the previous occupants who feel their carefully-nurtured plants are 'part of the family' and don't want to leave them behind.

Researchers have found a huge increase in so-called 'garden grabbing' - where people load garden plants into their removal vans alongside their furniture when they move house.



Uprooting: Many house sellers are clearing their gardens of their favourite plants and packing them into removal vans (file picture)

Many gardeners cannot bear to be parted from their favourite specimens after decades spent carefully nurturing and seeing them grow, says retailer Homebase.

The top five plants to be taken are Japanese maples, magnolia, roses, snowdrops and expensively sculptured bushes.

Matthew Compton, head of garden at Homebase, said: 'Leaving a favourite plant behind is seen by some people as an act of betrayal.'

'Many plants have spent a lifetime with their owners, sharing their ups and downs across the years.' Sentimentality is a key factor in people digging up favourite plants and taking them with them when moving.



Organised: Large pots are often used to move established garden plants, while mature specimen plants are often grown in large containers specifically so that they can be moved

Mr Compton said: 'Some have been planted by children when they were young, and as each child has grown up and left home, only the plants remain to remind parents of a once close family life. 'Others were planted by partners who have since died. Leaving them behind would be the equivalent of leaving their loved one's ashes on the mantelpiece,'

He added: 'Our customers tell us that, over the decades, plants become friends. They would no more dream of leaving them behind than a member of the family.'

Homebase said it discovered the trend when conducting consumer research into increasing demand for extra large pots and large specimen plants.

Large pots are often used to move established garden plants, while mature specimen plants are often grown in large containers specifically so that they can be moved.

The practice is particularly common among homeowners over the age of 45, many of whom spend all of their spare time in the garden.

Even an average sized garden in the UK has mature and established plants worth thousands of pounds, says Homebase.

Large clumps of hostas, mature, thriving roses, drifts of snowdrops and sweetly scented shrubs can represent a huge investment of time as well as money – making them almost impossible to replace overnight.

But homeowners planning to uproot their gardens are warned they could face legal action - unless it is made clear in writing to the buyer at time of sale.

Unless otherwise agreed, plants growing in gardens form part of the sales agreement and removing them without explicit permission can invalidate the transaction, Homebase said.

Each plant and its location must be itemised carefully and win full agreement from the buyer and their solicitor beforehand.

And moving plants out of season or moving them to an area with different soil can prove fatal.

Mr Compton said: 'If you intend to move home within the next ten years, a better approach is to avoid the problem in the first place.

'Buy large specimen plants which can be left in their pots for a relatively long time. Since these are moveable, they do not form part of the home's fixtures and fittings, and so can be moved at will.

'Or continually re-pot favourite plants as they grow, and make it clear that they will be going with you when you move home.

'Also, bear in mind that your new garden may not suit the plants you want to take with you.

'Check the acidity of the soil, as well as the direction and levels of daylight beforehand. If in doubt, keep the plants in pots.

'Digging up plants in the middle of their growing season, no matter how carefully, can often prove fatal.'

He added: 'Bear in mind that a new home represents a new beginning, and this applies to your garden as much as to you. 'Designing and planting up a new garden can be equally as invigorating and rewarding as looking after an old one.'

Link: http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2556375/House-sellers-stripping-gardens-bare-new-owners-chance-save-beloved-plants.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490