



Dividing Perennials



Dividing perennials is an essential gardening practice that promotes healthy plant growth, revitalizes old plants, and provides new plants for your garden. Dividing perennials is crucial to ensure strong growth and bloom each season. The best time to divide most perennials is during early spring or late summer/early fall, as these periods allow plants to re-establish roots before extreme temperatures set in.

Why Divide Perennials?

Encourage Vigorous Growth: Dividing perennials helps prevent overcrowding and improves overall plant health by rejuvenating older plants that may have become too dense or have stopped blooming.

Increase Your Plant Collection: By dividing a healthy plant, you can multiply your garden stock or share plants with friends and family.

Improve Flowering: Dividing plants helps to enhance their blooming potential, as it allows them to access more nutrients and space

When to Divide Perennials

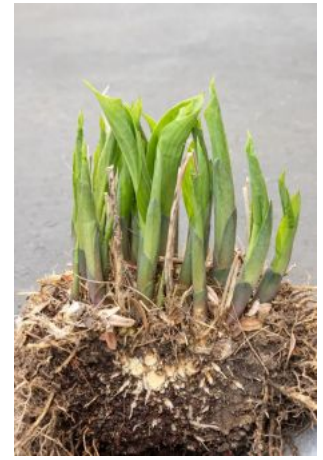
- **Spring:** Early spring (just as new growth begins) is an excellent time to divide perennials that bloom late in the season, like astilbes, hostas, and daylilies. This timing gives the plants the entire growing season to re-establish themselves.
- **Late Summer/Early Fall:** Perennials that bloom in early summer (like peonies or coral bells) should be divided after their blooms have faded, typically late August through early September. This allows enough time for roots to establish before the winter chill.

How to Divide Perennials

1. **Prepare Your Tools:** Have a sharp spade or garden fork, a clean knife or pruning shears, and a bucket or wheelbarrow for collecting divisions. Sterilize your tools with rubbing alcohol to prevent spreading disease.
2. **Dig Up the Plant:** Gently dig around the plant's base with a spade or fork, taking care not to damage the roots. Lift the plant out of the soil.
3. **Examine the Root System:** Look for natural divisions or clumps in the root ball. You may notice some roots are dense and knotted, while others are healthy and strong.
4. **Separate the Plant:** Use your hands, a sharp knife, or pruning shears to divide the root ball into sections. Each division should have several healthy shoots and a good amount of roots attached.
5. **Replanting Divisions:** Replant the divisions in prepared holes, ensuring the soil is well-draining. Space each division according to the mature size of the plant to allow room for growth. Water well after planting.
6. **Post-Division Care:** Keep the newly divided plants watered until they become established. Apply a transplanter fertilizer to aid in root growth. Mulch lightly to maintain moisture and protect the roots from the fluctuating temperatures of Ontario's weather.



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Tips for Success

- Choose healthy plants for division. Avoid dividing plants that are diseased or struggling.
- Apply a transplant fertilizer after planting, to encourage root growth and establishment.
- For large or woody perennials like peonies, divide them carefully to maintain their vigor.
- Ensure divisions are planted at the same depth as they were in their original spot.
- Consider dividing plants every 3 to 5 years to maintain healthy growth and blooming.

Dividing perennials is a simple but effective way to rejuvenate your garden and promote healthy plant life. By following these guidelines, you'll not only increase your plant collection but also enjoy a vibrant and thriving garden season after season.



When perennial clumps become too large for their space, divide into more plants to share & transplant.



Ornamental grasses become sparse in their centres and lend themselves well to dividing for rejuvenation.