

## Dividing Perennials

Mid to late August is ideal time



### When to Divide Plants

Mid to late August is the ideal time to separate the following perennials: daylilies, Siberian iris, peonies, coneflowers, hosta, perennial salvia, nepeta, veronica, coreopsis, monarda, yarrow, spiderwort, and rudbeckia. Prune all stems to the height of 4-6" for ease of handling. Division can be done several ways. Often the easiest method is to use a sharp shovel and remove sections (chunks) from the outside ring of the plant's root system.

Each segment should be about 4-6" across with a good amount of roots. Clumps of this size should flower next season. This method keeps the mother plant intact. Just fill back in around the original clump with amended soil.

Another method is to cut the stems down to 3-4" dig the entire clump, and divide the entire plant into smaller sections. A garden fork, knife, saw, or your hands will separate the large clump quite easily. This allows you to be able to completely relocate the entire plant.

Repeat blooming daylilies, in particular Stella d'Oro, Happy Returns, Pardon Me, Big Smile, Eenie Weenie, Fairy Tale Pink, Lullaby Baby, and Siloam Dream Baby, will not repeat bloom if they are not kept thinned every 3-4 years. They will bloom one time early in the season, but the rest of the season they will just randomly produce a few blooms. Siberian iris will develop a large dead center if the plant is not kept "thinned," and the remaining outside stems often do not remain upright to present an attractive planting. Older peony plants should be dug up and damaged or hollow roots should be disposed of. Often over time, dirt washes in over the eye of the peony root causing the plant to produce no flowers. When a peony is re-set, the "pink" eye must be exactly 1½"

under the soil to ensure blooms. Coreopsis, salvia, veronica, and nepeta will usually produce more flower heads and remain in bloom longer if the clumps are not allowed to become overgrown. Yarrow, monarda, and spiderwort will have less tendency to "flop" if the clumps are not too crowded.

### Preparing The New Planting Site

Preparing the new planting site is important, especially if your soil is heavy clay. Hand spade or till the planting site to the depth of 8-10." In preparing a new bed site, we recommend incorporating a large 4 cubic foot bag of perlite and 3 bags of cottonburr compost (2 cu. ft. size bag) to every 50 square foot of planting bed. If individual holes are your preferred method, mix the perlite and compost 50/50 in a wheelbarrow and use that mix as a 50/50 mix with the existing soil. For small jobs, we recommend you consider using Dr. Earth's All Purpose Planting Mix, a blend of humus, fir bark, peat moss, earthworm castings, and beneficial microbes 50/50 with the existing soil.

Our experienced staff will assist you with your choice of amending products.



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## Continued...

Into the bottom of every planting hole, sprinkle Myke For Perennials. This beneficial bacteria should be used ½ cup per 8-10" planting hole. For best results, set the separated roots in direct contact with the Myke to colonize roots and establish a blooming size clump in a short time. If you prefer, Superthrive may also be used in the water applied after the new plants are in place. Dilute 3-4 Tab. per gallon of water. Mulch with a thin 2" layer of hardwood mulch that is kept back away from the stems at least 2-3." Keep well-watered, and stand back to watch how quickly these new plantings will begin a vigorous fall growth.

The following perennials should be separated in early spring with the same approach described above. Fall flowering sedum, oriental or Asiatic lilies, asters, tall garden phlox, silver mound, gaillardia, Russian sage, all decorative grasses, mums, ferns, astilbe, and groundcovers.



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