

Timing of Perennial Division is Important



Dividing perennials is an important part of considering a garden makeover. When to divide them is important for the plants. Most plants are forgiving and can be divided in spring or fall. However, a few are particular and need to be divided at the right time. Never divide a clump of plants too far. The average large clump of perennials can make 6-8 new plants. If a plant does not have enough crown tissue, it cannot regenerate. Think about peony divisions needing 3-5 eyes (buds) in order to make a new plant.

Key: S= Spring division; F= Fall division; * = Divide after bloom; ^ = Wear gloves, sap can irritate your skin

Divide these plants by hand; These plants have a mass of fine roots underground. They will have distinct shoots with roots. These pups can be pulled apart carefully. Sometimes you might need a sharp knife.

Bee balm (*Monarda* spp.) S/F
Blanket flowers (*Gaillardia* spp.) S/F
Bleeding heart (*Dicentra* spp.) S*
Bugleweed (*Ajuga reptans*) S/F
Catmint (*Nepeta* spp.) S/F
Columbine (*Aquilegia* spp.) S/F
Cranesbill (*Geranium* spp.) S/F
Creeping Jenny (*Lysimachia nummularia*) S/F
Deadnettle (*Lamium maculatum*) S/F
Dogtooth daisy (*Helenium autumnale*)
Epimedium (*Epimedium* spp.) S*/F
Foam flower (*Tiarella cordifolia*) S/F
Forget-me-not (*Myosotis sylvatica*) S*/F
Geranium (*Geranium* spp.) S
Hellebore (*Helleborus* spp.) S*/F
Jacob's ladder (*Polemonium caeruleum*) S/F
Lady's mantle (*Alchemilla mollis*) S/F
Lamb's ears (*Stachys byzantina*) S/F

Moss pink (*Phlox subulata*) F
Obedient plant (*Pysotegia* spp.) S
Primrose (*Primula* spp.) S*
Lungwort (*Pulmonaria* spp.) S*/F
Sea thrift (*Armeria maritima*) S/F
Speedwell (*Veronica spicata*) S/F
Spurge (*Euphorbia myrsinites*) S/F^
Stonecrop (*Sedum spectabile*) S/F
Sweet woodruff (*Galium odoratum*) F
Violets, pansy (*Viola* spp.) S/F
Wormwood (*Artemisia ludoviciana*) S/F
Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) S/F

Divide these plants with a spade or potato fork; The roots of the following plants are dense and thick and can be pried apart with a potato fork or cut apart with a sharp spade.

Anemone (*Anemone* × *hybrida*) S
Aster (*Symphyotrichum* spp.) S
Bee balm (*Monarda didyma*) S/F
Bellflower (*Campanula* spp.) S/F
Big bluestem grass (*Andropogon gerardii*) S/F
Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia* spp.) S/F
Cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*) S/F
Catmint (*Nepeta* × *faassenii*) S/F
Coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*) S/F
Daisy, Shasta (*Leucanthemum* × *superbum*) S
Daylily (*Hemerocallis* spp.) S/F
Forest grass (*Habenochloa macra*) S/F
Garden phlox (*Phlox paniculata*) S/F
Gaura (*Gaura lindheimeri*) S/F
Goldenrod (*Solidago* spp.) S/F
Hyssop (*Agastache foeniculum*) S/F
Hosta (*Hosta* spp.) S/F
Japanese painted fern (*Athyrium niponicum* Pictum') S/F
Lemon balm (*Melissa officinalis*)
Ligularia (*Ligularia dentata*) S/F
Masterwort (*Astrantia major*) S/
Penstemon (*Penstemon* spp.) S/F
Perennial sage (*Salvia* × *superba*) S*/F
Pinks (*Dianthus plumarius*) S/F
Poppy (*Papaver* spp.) F
Red hot poker (*Knifophia* spp.) S/F
Salvia (*Salvia hardy* spp.) S

Sedge (*Carex morrowii*) S/F
Siberian iris (*Iris sibirica*) F
Silver grass (*Miscanthus* spp.) S/F
Snakeroot (*Cimicifuga racemosa*) S/F
Stonecrop (*Sedum spectabile*) S
Switch grass (*Panicum virgatum*) S/F
Tickseed (*Coreopsis verticillata*) S/F
Turtlehead (*Chelone glabra*) S/F
Yarrow (*Achillea filipendulina*) S/F

Slice apart woody crowns with a handsaw; rhizomes and tubers, the thick fleshy roots are technically underground stems. The clump should be taken up and cut into divisions with a serrated soil knife or handsaw

Amsonia (*Amsonia* spp.) S/F
Astilbe (*Astilbe* spp.) S/F
Doll's eyes (*Actaea pachypoda*) S
Gayfeather (*Liatris spicata*) S/F
Goatsbeard (*Aruncus dioicus*) S/F
Coral bells (*Heuchera*) S
Joe Pye weed (*Eupatorium maculatum*) S/F
Lilyturf (*Liriope spicata*) S/F
Male fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*) S/F
Meadowsweet (*Filipendula* spp.) S/F
Peony (*Paeonia* cvs.) F
Solomon's seal (*Polygonatum odoratum*) S/F
Wild blue indigo (*Baptisia australis*) S*/F

Arum (*Arum italicum*) F
Bergenia (*Bergenia cordifolia*) S/F
Caladium (*Caladium* spp.) S
Calla lily (*Zantedeschia aethiopica*) S
Canna (*Canna* spp.) S
Corydalis (*Corydalis lutea*) S/F
Dahlia (*Dahlia* cvs.) S
Elephant ear (*Alocasia* spp.) S
Iris (*Iris* spp.) F
Lady fern (*Athyrium filix-femina*) S/F
Lily-of-the-valley (*Convallaria majalis*) S/F
Rhubarb (*Rheum palmatum*) S
Rodgersia (*Rodgersia pinnata*) S/F
Spurge (*Euphorbia griffithii*) S/F^
Wild ginger (*Asarum europaeum*) S

These perennial cannot be divided, they have a single stem, taproot are woody in nature or they simply resent being divided.

Butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*)
Candytuft (*Iberis sempervirens*)
Carnation (*Dianthus caryophyllus*)
Common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*)
Delphinium (*Delphinium* × *elatum*)
Euphorbia (*Euphorbia characias* ssp. *wulfenii*)
Foxglove (*Digitalis* spp.)
Garden sage (*Salvia officinalis*)
Lavender cotton (*Santolina chamaecyparissus*)
Lavender (*Lavandula* spp.)
Rose campion (*Lychnis coronaria*)
Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*)
Russian sage (*Perovskia atriplicifolia*)
Sea holly (*Eryngium* spp.)
Silvermound (*Artemisia schmidtiana*)
Swamp Milkweed (*Asclepias incarnate*)
Trillium (*Trillium grandiflorum*)

Cut up rhizomes and tubers with a knife before spring replanting. Do not cut these plants a part in fall before winter storage.