

Sustainable Applewood Perennial Swap

How To Divide Perennials:

What is a rule of thumb for dividing perennials?

The general rule of thumb is to divide perennials **every three years**. However, this depends on the perennial and its location. Some perennials, like Chrysanthemums, like to be divided every year. Others, like Gypsophila, don't like to be divided at all.

When is the best time to divide perennials?

In general, it is best to divide **spring and summer blooming perennials in the fall, and fall bloomers in spring**. By dividing the plant when it is not flowering, all the plant's energy can go to root and leaf growth.

What are signs that a perennial needs dividing?

After a few years in the garden, perennials start to produce smaller or fewer/no blooms, develop a bald spot in the center of the crown, or require staking to avoid stems from falling over. All of these are signs that the perennial needs to be divided.

Is it better to divide perennials in fall or spring?

"Generally speaking, perennials that have a tuberous bulb should be divided in the spring," DeVore says. "Plants that have fleshy roots can be divided in the fall."

What is the best tool for dividing perennials?

Unless the plant is quite small you'll find that the easiest tool to use is a garden fork or spade to lift out the entire root ball. Pry the root ball apart into two or more pieces. If the growth is too dense to pull apart you can cut the root ball using a sharp spade, hand saw or hori hori knife.

If you're dividing a rhizomic plant like irises, you'll break up the rhizome. Using a garden fork or spade gently loosen the entire clump and then dig under the plant, preserving as many roots as possible. Remove the majority of the soil and expose the rhizome or clump by gently shaking or washing away the soil. Then, with a sharp knife or pruning shears, slice the plant into several new pieces. Leave a minimum of two to three growing points on each new clump. Discard any dead or diseased parts.

Which perennials are easy to divide?

Perennials with finer root systems are easiest to divide. Plants like bearded irises, day lilies, yarrow, aster, coropsis, monarda (bee balm), sedum, and chives.

Perennials not to divide!

Butterfly Weed, Euphorbias, Oriental Poppies, Baby's Breath, Gas Plant (*Dictamnus Albus*), Japanese Anemones, False Indigo (*Baptisia*), and Columbines

An Illustrated Guide to Dividing Perennials:

GrowItBuildIt.com: How to Divide Perennials, an Illustrated Guide