

Dividing Perennials

Botanical	Common Name	Division needed / years	When to divide * <small>4 weeks before killing frost</small>	Additional notes	Growth habit	Root type
Achillea	Yarrow	2 to 3	Early spring as new growth emerges	Separate by cutting or pulling apart. Discard central woody core.	spreads	
Aconitum	Monkshood	no	Spring or Early Fall *	Resents disturbance. All parts of the plant are poisonous, so use rubber gloves when dividing tuberous roots and handle with care.	clumps	tuber
Aegopodium pod.	Snow-On-The-Mountain	1 to 3	Spring or Early Fall *	Replant the divisions, making sure that each contains a bit of roots and a bit of top growth	spreads	underground roots
Agastache	Anise Hyssop	3 to 4	Spring	Dig up and divide agastache every three to four years. Replant the divisions, making sure that each contains a bit of roots and a bit of top growth	clumps	
Ajuga reptans	Bugleweed	1 to 3	Spring or Early Fall *	Can be divided any time of year, but spring and fall are best for quick rooting.	spreads	stolons
Alchemilla vulgaris (mollis)	Lady's Mantle	6 to 10	Spring or Early Fall *	Cut crown into sections with sharp spade or knife, making sure that each contains a bit of roots and a bit of top growth	clumps	
Allium	Ornamental Onion		After flowering	Divide overcrowded clusters after foliage disappears and replant at the same soil level.	spreading	bulb
Amsonia tabernaemontana	Blue Star	no	Spring or Early Fall *	Seldom needs to be divided; grows slowly so will take several years to establish from divisions. If you want a division anyway, slice down the length of the root, making sure there is at least 1 eye, some of the taproot and a few sideroots	clumps	taproot
Anemone tomentosa	Grape-Leaf Anemone	5 to 10	Spring	It doesn't like to have main clump disturbed; sends out underground runners, so dig small new plants around the edges or any piece with an eye or sucker already forming for replanting.	running	underground running roots
Anthemis tinctoria	Golden Marguerite	2 to 3	Spring	Divide root ball.	clumps	
Aquilegia caerulea	Columbine	no	Spring (or Late Summer)	Does not like to be disturbed. Reseeds easily, so that may be a better way to get more plants.	clumps	
Armeria juniperfolia	Thrift	no	Spring or Early Fall *		clumps	
Artemisia	White Sage	4 to 5	Spring	Regular division is important for health of plant and helps keep its invasive nature under control. Discard weak centers.	spreads	
Aruncus sinensis	Goatsbeard	no	Spring or Early Fall *	Deep rootstock resents disturbance. Use knife to cut the tough woody crown.	clumps	woody crown
Asarum europaeum	European Ginger	no		Use sharp knife to cut rhizome.	spreads	rhizomes
Asclepias incarnata	Swamp Milkweed	no	Spring	Slice down the length of the root. Every piece that has at least one eye, some of the root, and a few side roots is a viable division. For best results buy a new plant.	clump	taproot
Asclepias tuberosa	Butterfly Weed	no		Does not like to be disturbed - taproot! For best results purchase new plant.		taproot

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Aster novi-belgii	Michaelmas Daisy	2 to 3	Spring	Many cultivars require frequent division and replanting of small healthy pieces from outside of the clump, discard dead central portions.	clumps	
Astilbe	False Spirea	2 to 3	Spring or Early Fall *	Needs division for best bloom. Make a new plant by simply cutting between the rooted stem and the mother plant. Cut plant into sections with handsaw or knife.	spread	woody crown
Astrantia	Masterwort	4 to 5	Spring or Early Fall *	Divide with spade or pitchfork when new shoots begin to emerge.	clumps	
Baptisia australis	False Indigo	no	Spring	Resents disturbance. But if you need to do it try to dig deep to remove entire root system without breaking it. With sharp knife or saw slice down the length of the root. Every piece that has at least one eye, some of the taproot, and a few side roots is a viable division.	clumps	tap root
Bergenia	Pig Squeak	4	Spring after bloom	Will need dividing about every 4 years in moist, fertile soil; less frequently in dry soil. Cut up rhizomes and tubers with a knife	clumps	rhizomes
Brunnera macrophylla	False Forget-Me-Not	no	Late spring early summer after flowering	Will reseed but divide to keep specific cultivars true.	clumps	
Campanula	Bellflower		Spring or Late Summer (August)	Easy to divide; most are clump-forming, although some are spreaders	spreads & clumps	
Catananche caerulea	Cupid's Dart	1 to 3	Spring or Early Fall *	Divide rootball to keep the plant vigorous.	clumps	
Centaurea montana	Bachelor's Button	1 to 3	Spring or Early Fall *	Easy to divide; needs to be divided often to keep plants vigorous.	clumps	
Chelone glabra	Turtlehead	4 to 5	Spring	Easy to divide with spate, keep moist.	spreads	
Chelone lyonii	Turtlehead	4 to 5	Spring	Easy to divide with spate, keep moist.	spreads	
Cimicifuga	Snakeroot	no	Spring	Resents disturbance.	clumps	
Clematis		no				
Convallaria majalis	Lily-of-the-Valley		Spring or after Flowering	Divide to keep invasive nature under control. Can be divided as clumps or single pips depending on how many divisions you want and how patient you are.	spreads	
Coreopsis grandiflora	Tickseed	1 to 3	Spring or Early Fall *	Cut crown apart with sharp knife. Coreopsis grandiflora and Coreopsis lanceolata live longer if divided every 2 to 3 years. Discard week centers.	clumps	
Coreopsis verticillata	Threadleaf Tickseed	3	Spring or Early Fall *	Divide when needed.	spreads	rhizomes
Corydalis flexuosa	Fumitory	2 to 3	Spring	The plants divide naturally and they seem to thrive better on frequent division.	clump	rhizomes
Corydalis lutea	Yellow Fumitory		No	Reseeds.		

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Crocoshmia	Montbretia	3 to 4	Spring	Montbretia bulbs/corms multiply pretty fast; soon you will have all kinds of baby sizes and you may want to separate the different sizes. If you live in a cold climate just throw those in a paper bag for the winter and replant them in the spring. Another trick if they get real crowded and you can't separate the bulbs out, just divide them by twisting them, just twist them apart and they divide real easily.	clumps	corms
Delphinium elatum	Larkspur	1 to 3	Spring	Fall-divided plants often die over winter. Regular division can prolong their life.	clumps	
Dianthus	Border Pink	1 to 3	Spring	Dividing every few years can often extend longevity.	clumps	
Dicentra formosa	Fern-leaved Bleeding Heart	no	Late spring early summer after flowering	Divide by hand. Cut crown apart with sharp knife, if division is wanted. Roots are brittle, so handle carefully.	clumps	
Dicentra spectabilis	Bleeding Heart	no	Spring late spring early summer after flowering	Divide after blooming but before foliage goes dormant in summer; roots are brittle, so handle carefully.	clumps	
Dictamnus albus var.	Gasplant	no		Divisions are difficult due to crown damage. A spade plunged straight down through the plant's center, cutting the roots cleanly without severe bruising gives best results.		taproot
Digitalis ambigua (grandiflora)	Foxglove		Spring	Separat new plantlets from crown	clumps	
Digitalis purpurea	Foxglove		No	Reseeds	clumps	
Echinacea purpurea	Coneflower	4 to 5	Spring (or Early Fall)	Can remain undisturbed for years. Divide every 4 to 5 years for plant's health. Cut crown apart with sharp knife.	clumps	
Echinops ritro	Globe Thistle	no	Spring or Early Fall *	Resents disturbance. Reseeds, new seedlings can be transplanted. For best division results divide plants only when they are young.	clumps	
Echium amoenum	Red Feathers	no		Short lived, reseeds		
Epimedium	Bishop's Cap		Spring after flowering	Doesn't need to be divided often; if necessary, divide in early spring before flowering or right after flowering is done; some spread, but not quickly.	spreads/ clumps	
Eremurus isabellinus	Foxtail Lily	3 to 5	Early fall	Divide with handsaw or sharp knife		tuber
Eryngium maritimum	Sea Holly	no	Spring	Can be done, if disturbance is kept to minimum		taproot
Eryngium planum	Sea Holly	no	Spring	If disturbance is kept to minimum.		taproot
Eupatorium	Joe Pye Weed	6	Spring or Early Fall *	You might need a saw or hatchet to cut apart woody crown. Divide in early spring for easy handling; for fall division, cut back Eupatorium flowers. Not essential for plant health to often divide.	clumps	woody crown
Euphorbia polychroma	Cushion Spurge	no	Spring or Early Fall *	Discard central woody clump. Roots of some spurges are brittle, so handle carefully.	clumps	

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Fallopia japonica	Fleece Flower	2 to 3	Early spring	Easy dividing rootball	clumps	
Filipendula	Meadowsweet	5 to 10	Spring	Break into sections (or use handsaw) make sure each division has about 3 strong growth buds.	spreads	woody crown
Gaillardia	Blanket flower	3 to 5	Spring or Early Fall *	Easy to divide. Roots usually pull apart by hand.	clumps	
Galium odoratum	Sweet Woodruff		Spring or Early Fall *	Divide by hand.	spreads	
Gentian		no				
Geranium	Cranesbill	5 to 10	Spring or Early Fall *	Most species rarely need dividing, but divides easily. Some varieties can be pulled apart by hand while others will need to be cut apart with a sharp knife.	spreading	
Gypsophila paniculata	Baby's Breath	no		Deep taproots resent disturbance. Double-flowered cultivars are grafted and, therefore, cannot be divided	clumps	taproot
Helenium	Sneezeweed	3 to 4	Spring or Early Fall *	Divide in early spring when foliage is just emerging; dividing every 3 to 4 years will keep plants vigorous and blooming heavily.	clumps	
Helleborus x ballardiae	Lenten Rose	no	Spring after flowering	Divide if you have to while plants are in bloom or immediately after they stop flowering. They will take their time to get reestablished, so better to be patient.	clumps	
Hemerocallis	Daylily			Divides easily; you can use spade or 2 forks back to back cut through the fleshy center and pry apart, make sure each division has at least 2 to 3 eyes. Daylilies will bloom better if divided regularly	clumps	rhizomes
Heuchera	Coral Bells		Spring or Early Fall *	Cut crown apart with sharp knife. Discard old, woody, central portion.	clumps	
Hibiscus	Rose Mallow		Spring	Divide clumps into pieces leave enough sprouts	clumps	
Hosta		5 to 10	Spring or later	Many hostas get their mature beautiful shape, their best form only after many years if not divided too often. Divide your clump with a spade or 2 forks back to back, or a wedge can be taken from a plant that still sits in the ground and it will soon fill back in. You can also divide later in the season but this will leave your hosta lopsided for the summer.	clumps	
Iberis sempervirens	Candytuft	no		Plants with woody crowns often have rooted layers (branches that have developed roots while touching the soil). The layers can be cut off the parent plant, dug up and replanted as though they were divisions. But it will sulk quite a while afterwards and may not come out of it at all.	clumps	woody crown

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Iris germanica	German Bearded Iris	3 to 4	July/august	Divide in summer when flowering is over at least 6 weeks before frost so that plants have time to get established before winter. Dig out clumps, clean off soil, break off or cut off old parts from rhizome and discard, leave 1 fan and 3-6" of rhizome per division.. Lay the rhizomes horizontally on top of a little mound of dirt at soil level and drape the roots down the mound, cover the roots leaving half of the rhizome sticking out of the ground.	spreads	rhizome
Iris siberica		5 to 10	July/august	The timing is important with Iris, they neither t like spring dividing nor fall. Divide right after blooming; be sure that each division has about a half dozen or more fans of foliage and protect the roots from drying out during the replanting process.	clumps	
Kirengeshoma palmata	Yellow Waxbells	rarely	Spring	Taking care not to damage young, tender shoots.	clumps	
Lamiastrum galeobdolon	Yellow Archangel		Spring or Early Fall *		spreading	
Lamium maculatum	Dead Nettle		Spring or Early Fall *	Lamium are remarkably easy to divide. You can basically treat them however you like and they will come bouncing back to life with a little water.	runner	
Lespedeza	Bush Clover	no		Woody crowns which have developed beside mother plant can be cut apart with scissors or pried apart with 2 forks back to back.	clumps	Woody crown
Leucanthemum superbum	Shasta Daisy	3 to 4	Spring or Early Fall *	Divide every 3 or 4 years to keep plants vigorous; discard woody central portion of clump; may need two garden forks to pry clump apart.	spreads	
Liatris spicata	Blazing Star	4 to 5	Spring	Easy to divide; divide every 4 or 5 years to keep plants vigorous		corms
Ligularia	Golden Ray, Ragwort	6	Spring or Early Fall *	Not essential for plant health to often divide.	clumps	
Limonium latifolium	Sea Lavender	rarely	Spring	Only if needed	clumps	
Lobelia	Cardinal Flower		Spring		clumps	
Lupinus x	Hardy Lupine		No	Reseeds		taproot
Lysimachia clethroides	Gooseneck Loosestrife	2 to 3	Spring or Early Fall *	Very vigorous plant. Reduce its size by pulling out stem stalks around the outer edge and replant these (trimmed) if you want more.	spreads	
Lysimachia nummularia	Creeping Jenny		Spring or Early Fall *	Easy	spreads	
Macleaya cordata	Plume Poppy		Spring or Early Fall *		spreads	underground roots
Monarda	Bee Balm	1 to 3	Spring or Early Fall *	Spreads quickly; easy to divide; for ease of handling, divide in spring as foliage is emerging. Discard old central clump.	spreads	surface root

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<i>Myosotis sylvatica compacta</i>	Forget-Me-Not		Late spring early summer after flowering	Reseeds	clumps	
<i>Nepeta</i>	Catmint		Spring	Cut into sections with sharp knife or spade, divides easily. Can also be divided later if cut back and watered carefully.	clump	
<i>Nymphaea</i>	Waterlily	2 to 3	spring or any time	Spring time is the easiest for dividing but they can be divided any time. Divide when plant outgrows pot: cut off and discard a large portion of the old section of the tuber, keeping the growing tip: 5 inches of tuber for large varieties, 2 inches for smaller varieties. For replanting use heavy clay soil, place the cut end of tuber against the pot wall, pushing it slightly under the soil keeping the crown above soil surface towards the center of the pot. Lightly cover soil with peat gravel without covering the crown or growing tip.	clumps	rhizomes
<i>Oenothera pilosella</i>	Evening Primrose		Spring or Early Fall *		spreads	
Ornamental grasses		3 to 4	Spring	Spring dividing for most grasses; many do not tolerate fall division. Very dense fibrous root system, may require the use of an axe or saw to divide. You can dig out the whole clump to divide or chop out segments.		
<i>Pachysandra terminalis</i>	Spurge		Spring	Easy	spreads	
<i>Paeonia</i>	Peony	no	September or october	Rarely needs division, but do it after a frost if you want to divide your peony. Divisions may wait up to 3 years before blooming again. There should be 3 to 5 well-developed eyes on each of your divisions. Plant peonies with the eyes no deeper than 1 inch below the surface.	clumps	
<i>Papaver orientale</i>	Oriental Poppy	no	Mid- to Late Summer	Resents disturbance. If necessary divide in early summer after flowering.		tap root
<i>Pardancanda norrisii</i>	Candy Lily	3	Spring	Treat like bearded iris		rhizomes
<i>Penstemon</i>	Beard-Tongue	1 to 3	Spring	Divide with spade or pitchfork.	clumps	
<i>Perovskia</i>	Russian Sage	no		Does not like to be disturbed. Fragile roots may die if bruised.		
<i>Persicaria polymorpha</i>	Giant Fleeceflower		Spring or Early Fall *	Very easy. Getting a lot of root isn't important. All you really need to do is find a good section, cut into it with a sharp spade, and remove a hefty section. It'll take off like gangbusters.	spreads	
<i>Phlox paniculata</i>	Garden Phlox	2 to 4	Spring (or Late Summer)	Easy to divide; regular division keeps clumps smaller, less prone to powdery mildew; discard woody, dead center of clump	clumps	

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Phlox subulata	Moss Phlox	3	Spring after flowering	Find the center of your growth of moss phlox. They grow and spread quickly over large areas, and you're going to need to locate and isolate the root system of the plant in order to divide it successfully.	spreads	
Physostegia virginiana	Obedient Plant	1 to 3	Spring	Divides and roots easily; spreads rapidly so can be divided often for more plants or thin the bed out.	runner	
Platycodon grandiflorus	Balloonflower	no	Spring	Does not like to be disturbed. Will not bloom for a year or two after division. Handle brittle root system carefully.	clumps	tap root
Polemonium caeruleum	Jacob's Ladder	6 to 10	Spring or Early Fall *	Divide by hand	clump	
Polygonatum falc.	Solomon's Seal		Spring or Early Fall *	If you want divisions, leave several buds on each division.		
Primula	Drumstick Primrose		Spring after flowering or Early Fall	Divide by hand.	clump	
Pulmonaria	Lungwort	6 to 10	Late spring early summer after flowering	Water regularly following division		
Pulsatilla	Pasque Flower	no	Spring or Early Fall *	Does not like to be disturbed. Fragile roots may die if bruised.	clump	
Rodgersia pinnata	Rodger's Flower		Spring	Cut up rhizomes and tubers with a knife	clumps	rhizomes
Rudbeckia fulgida	Blackeyed Susan	4 to 5	Spring or Early Fall *	Divide with spade or pitchfork. Easy to divide; divide every 3 to 4 years; for best appearance next season, don't make divisions too small	clumps	surface root
Sagina sub.	Scotch Moss			Treat like sod - dig out a square and transplant	spreading	
Salvia	Sage	no	Spring	Often not recommended to divide or seldom. But you can careful separate offshoots from mother plant when the plant starts to die out in the center and replant.	clumps	woody crown
Sanguisorba menziesii	Burnet	4 to 5	Spring or Late Summer		clumps	
Sedum spectabile	Showy Stonecrop		Spring	Easy dividing in spring when foliage is still small.	clumps	
Sedum, creeping	Stonecrop			Treat like sod - dig out a square and transplant	creeping	surface roots
Sempervivum	Hens & Chicks			Break off baby rosettes as wanted and transplant	spreading	
Sidalcea	Prairie Mallow	1 to 3	4 to 5 years		clumps	
Solidago rugosa	Goldenrod	3 to 5	Spring	Divide with spade or pitchfork. Divide every 3 to 5 years to keep plants vigorous.	clumps	
Stachys byzantina	Lamb's Ear	2 to 4	Spring or Early Fall *	Discard week centers.	spreads	
Tanacetum cocc.	Pyrethrum, Painted Daisy	1 to 3	Spring or Late Summer		clumps	

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<i>Thalictrum rochebrunianum</i>	Meadow Rue	no	Spring	Most species are slow to recover after division.	clumps	
<i>Thermopsis chinensis</i>	Carolina Lupine	no	Spring	Resents disturbance. Only divide when plants are several years old.	clumps	
<i>Thymus serp.</i>	Creeping Thyme		Spring		spreads	woody crown
<i>Tiarella</i>	Foamflower	1 to 3	Spring or Early Fall *	Divide by hand.	clumps	
<i>Tradescantia virginiana</i>	Spiderwort	3 to 5	Spring (until flowers set)	Division is only way to ensure duplication of cultivars.		
<i>Tricyrtis formosana</i>	Toad Lily	no	Spring		clumps	
<i>Trollius</i>	Globeflower	no	Spring or Early Fall *	Slow to recover from transplanting. Divide only if you must.	clumps	
<i>Vernonia lettermannii</i>	Ironweed	no	Spring	Slice down the length of the root. Every piece that has at least one eye, some of the taproot, and a few side roots is a viable division.		taproot
<i>Veronica</i> (not the creeping ones)	Speedwell	3 to 5	Spring or Early Fall *	Divide by hand. Easy to divide; dividing keeps clumps smaller so they don't fall apart in the middle.	clumps	
<i>Veronicastrum virginicum</i>	Culvers Root	4 to 5	Spring or Late Summer		clumps	
<i>Vinca minor</i>	Periwinkle		Spring or Early Fall *	If you want to divide vinca make sure to dig up big enough clumps and keep moist until rooted.	spreads	
<i>Yucca filamentosa</i>	Adam's Needle, Desert Candle	no		Resents disturbance. Divide only young plants. Established plants have deep, thick roots.	clumps	taproot