

Dividing Perennials in Parker County

Divide spring and summer blooming perennials during the fall and winter. Most perennials left in the ground in the same place for more than three years are likely to become overgrown and overcrowded. There may be dead or unsightly centers and they will need soil amendments. Flowers tend to be sparse and growth is poor. The clump depletes the soil fertility as the plant crowds itself.

To divide mature clumps of perennials, select only vigorous side shoots from the outer part of the clump. Discard the center of the clump. Divide the plant into clumps of three to five shoots each. Be careful not to over-divide; if a clump is too small, it does not give much color the first year after replanting. Separate fall perennials in time for them to become established before cold weather strikes, or divide when the plants are dormant just before new growth season. This is a great time to share plants with friends or construct new perennial beds. Mulch carefully in order to give the newly separated plants more protection against drying winds or cold. Do not apply too much mulch over the crowns because that may encourage rotting, or newly emerging shoots in the spring may have to stretch upwards to reach the sunlight.



Remember when dividing perennials to lift the plant, taking care not to damage the roots.

Then gently shake off loose soil and remove dead leaves and stems. Check for diseased plants and discard them.

Separate plants using your hands, a garden spade or knife.

Discard the center of the clump if weak and woody and divide the vigorous plants into clumps of three to five shoots each.

Bearded irises should retain a few inches of rhizome and one fan of leaves, trimmed back halfway.

Add compost, peat moss, or aged manure, along with a light application of super phosphate or bone meal to the perennial bed before replanting. Then replant the divided sections to their original depth.

You may want to label your new plants.

Water thoroughly and apply mulch.

**THE FOLLOWING CHART SHOWS SOME COMMON
LANDSCAPE PLANTS AND INFORMATION HELPFUL WITH
THEIR DIVISION.**

Scientific name	Name	How often to divide	When to divide	Addition Notes
<i>Achillea spp.</i>	Yarrow	1 to 3 years	Spring	Separate by cutting or pulling apart. Discard central woody core.
<i>Aconitum napellus</i>	Monkshood	10+ years	Spring	Resents disturbance. Due to poisonous nature of roots, use rubber gloves when dividing tuberous roots.
<i>Adiantum pedatum</i>	Maidenhair Fern		Spring	
<i>Aegopodium podagraria</i> ' <i>Variegatum</i> '	Snow-on-the-Mountain	1 to 3 years	Spring or Fall	
<i>Ajuga reptans</i>	Bugleweed	1 to 3 years	Spring or Fall	Can be divided any time of year, but spring and fall are best for quick rooting.
<i>Alchemilla mollis</i>	Lady's Mantle	6 to 10 years	Spring (or Early Fall)	Cut crown into sections with sharp spade or knife.
<i>Allium spp.</i>	Ornamental Onion		Fall	Divide overcrowded clusters after foliage disappears. Plant "new" bulbs in fall.
<i>Anemone spp.</i>	Anemone	10+ years	Spring	Resents disturbance.
<i>Aquilegia spp.</i>	Columbine	10+ years	Spring (or Late Summer)	Does not like to be disturbed. Dig deep to get all tapering, finger-like roots. Cut <i>young</i> plant apart with a sharp knife.
<i>Arisaema triphylla</i>	Jack-in-the-Pulpit		Fall	Divide offsets when plant is dormant
<i>Armeria spp.</i>	Thrift	4 to 5 years	Spring	
<i>Artemisia spp.</i>	Artemisia	4 to 5 years	Spring	Regular division is important for health of plant and helps keep its invasive nature under control. Discard weak central crown.
<i>Asarum spp.</i>	Ginger	6 to 10 years	Spring or Early Fall	Use sharp knife to cut rhizome.
<i>Asclepias spp.</i>	Milkweed	10+ years		Does not like to be disturbed. Dig deep to avoid damaging deep taproots. Cut crown apart with sharp knife. Rootstocks are brittle.

<i>Aster spp.</i>	Aster	1 to 3 years	Spring or Fall	Many cultivars require frequent division and replanting of small, healthy pieces from the outside of the clump.
<i>Astilbe x arendsii</i>	Astilbe	1 to 3 years	Spring (or Fall)	Needs division for best bloom. Cut plant into sections with sharp spade or knife.
<i>Athyrium filix-femina</i>	Lady Fern		Spring or Fall	Use sharp knife to cut rootstock.
<i>Athyrium niponicum</i>	Japanese Painted Fern		Spring or Fall	Use sharp knife to cut rootstock.
<i>Clematis spp.</i>	Clematis	10+ years	Spring	Divisions on only selected species. Cut crown apart with sharp knife or spade.
<i>Convallaria majalis</i>	Lily of the Valley		Spring or After Flowering	Divide to keep invasive nature under control.
<i>Coreopsis</i>	Tickseed	1 to 3 years	Spring (or Early Fall)	Cut crown apart with sharp knife. <i>Coreopsis grandiflora</i> and <i>Coreopsis lanceolata</i> live longer if divided every 2 to 3 years.
<i>Delphinium grandiflorum</i>	Delphinium	1 to 3 years	Spring	Fall-dug plants often die over winter. Regular division can prolong their life.
<i>Dendranthema x grandiflora</i>	Garden Mum	Every year	Spring	Will survive longer and be most vigorous if divided and replanted every spring. Discard central core.
<i>Dianthus spp.</i>	Pinks	1 to 3 years	Spring	Dividing every few years can often extend longevity.
<i>Dicentra spp.</i>	Bleeding Heart	6 to 10 years	Spring	Cut crown apart with sharp knife. Roots are brittle, so handle carefully.
<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>	Purple Coneflower	4 to 5 years	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.
<i>Echinops ritro</i>	Globe Thistle	6 to 10 years	Spring (or Fall)	Resents disturbance.
<i>Eupatorium purpureum</i>	Joe Pye Weed	1 to 3 years	Spring to Summer/Early Fall	Use knife to slice woody crown.
<i>Gaillardia x grandiflorum</i>	Blanket Flower	3 to 5 years	Spring or Fall	Divide by hand.
<i>Galium odoratum</i>	Sweet Woodruff		Spring (or Fall)	Divide by hand.

<i>Geranium spp.</i>	Cranesbill	6 to 10 years	Spring (or Early Fall)	Some varieties can be pulled apart by hand while others will need to be cut apart with a sharp knife.
Grasses			Spring	Most grow for years without division. Discard old/central portion of crown. Sharp knife or spade to divide smaller grasses; use hatchet/ax on large grasses
<i>Gypsophila paniculata</i>	Baby's Breath	10+ years		Deep taproots resent disturbance. Double-flowered cultivars are grafted and, therefore, cannot be divided
<i>Helleborus orientalis</i>	Lenten Rose	10+ years	Spring	Divide while plants are in bloom or immediately after they stop flowering.
<i>Hemerocallis spp.</i>	Daylily	3 to 5 years	Spring or immediately after flower	Division promotes heavier bloom.
<i>Heuchera sanguinea</i>	Coral Bells	1 to 3 years	Spring (or Fall)	Cut crown apart with sharp knife. Discard old, woody, central portion.
<i>Hibiscus moscheutos</i>	Rose Mallow, Hibiscus	10+ years	Spring or Fall	Plants are slow to send up shoots in spring, so fall division might be easier.
<i>Hosta spp.</i>	Hosta	6 to 10 years	Spring or Fall	If center of plant begins to get bare, cut out center and discard.
<i>Hyssopus officinalis</i>	Hyssop		Spring	Carefully divide woody roots.
<i>Iris spp.</i>	Bearded Iris	1 to 3 years	4 to 6 weeks after flowers are finished blooming	Fewer blooms indicate need for rejuvenation. Use a sharp knife to cut rhizome. Discard older part of plant.
<i>Iris siberica</i>	Siberian Iris	6 to 10 years	Spring* or Late Summer/Early Fall**	*In spring divide before leaves are 3" to 4" tall. Dividing too late can stop bloom for an entire season. **In early fall, cut leaves back to 6" to 12" and then divide. Use sharp knife to cut rhizome.
<i>Lamium maculatum</i>	Spotted Dead Nettle	4 to 5 years	Spring	Can also be divided mid-summer if cut back and watered well while taking root.
<i>Lamiastrum galeobdolon</i>	Golden Deadnettle		Spring or Fall	

<i>Leucanthemum x superbum</i>	Shasta Daisy	1 to 3 years	Spring (or Fall)	Regular division can extend their life. Discard old central portion.
<i>Liatrix spicata</i>	Blazing Star, Gayfeather	3 to 5 years	Spring	Cut into sections with sharp knife.
<i>Lilium</i>	Lily		Late Summer / Early Fall	There are so many types of lilies; a whole book could be dedicated to how to divide each type.
<i>Liriope spicata</i>	Creeping Lilyturf		Spring or Fall	Use division to keep invasive nature under control.
<i>Lobelia cardinalis</i>	Cardinal Flower	1 to 3 years	Spring or Fall	Discard old central, woody clump.
<i>Lysimachia spp.</i>	Loosestrife	6 to 10 years	Spring (or Fall)	
<i>Malva alcea 'Fastigiata'</i>	Hollyhock Mallow	1 to 3 years	Spring or Fall	
<i>Mentha spp.</i>	Mint	3 to 5 years	Spring or Fall	Use division to keep invasive nature under control.
<i>Mertensia virginica</i>	Bluebells	3 to 4 years	Spring	
<i>Monarda didyma</i>	Bee Balm	1 to 3 years	Spring	Discard old central clump.
<i>Myosotis spp.</i>	Forget-me-Not		Spring	Divide by hand.
<i>Nepeta spp.</i>	Catmint		*Spring	Cut into sections with sharp knife or spade. * Can also be divided after primary bloom period if cut back and watered carefully.
<i>Paeonia sp.</i>	Peony	10+ years	Early Fall Mid-August / September	Does not like to be disturbed. Dig around plant & slit roots with sharp spade. Roots are thick and brittle. Replanting too deep can diminish flowering.
<i>Papaver orientale</i>	Oriental Poppy	6 to 10 years	Mid- to Late Summer	Resents disturbance.
<i>Penstemon digitalis</i>	Smooth Penstemon	1 to 3 years	Spring	Divide with spade or pitchfork.
<i>Perovskia atriplicifolia</i>	Russian Sage	10+ years	Spring or Fall	Does not like to be disturbed.
<i>Phlox paniculata</i>	Tall Phlox	2 to 4 years	Spring (or Late Summer)	Discard central core if woody or dead.
<i>Phlox subulata</i>	Creeping Phlox	1 to 3 years	Spring or Early Fall	Use only non-woody stems.
<i>Platycodon grandiflorus</i>	Balloon Flower	10+ years	Spring	Does not like to be disturbed. Will not bloom for a year or two after division. Handle brittle root system carefully.

<i>Rudbeckia spp.</i>	Black Eyed Susan	4 to 5 years	Spring (or Fall)	Divide with spade or pitchfork.
<i>Salvia spp.</i>	Sage	6 to 10 years	Spring (or Fall)	When plant dies out in center, it's time to divide.
<i>Scabiosa columbaria</i>	Pincushion Flower	4 to 5 years	Spring	Division is a reliable but slow method of propagation.
<i>Sedum spp.</i>	Stonecrop	4-5 years	Spring	Divide by hand.
<i>Sempervivum tectorum</i>	Hen & Chicks		Spring or Fall	Separate small outer rosettes from parent plant.
<i>Stachys byzantina</i>	Lamb's Ears	4 to 5 years	Spring (or Fall)	Divide by hand.
<i>Thymus spp.</i>	Thyme	4 to 5 years	Spring	
<i>Tradescantia x andersoniana</i>	Spiderwort	3 to 5 years	Spring (until flowers set)	Division is only way to ensure duplication of cultivars.
<i>Tricyrtis hirta</i>	Toad Lily	6 to 10 years	Spring	
<i>Veronica spp.</i>	Speedwell	3 to 5 years	Spring or Early Fall	
<i>Vinca minor</i>	Periwinkle		Spring or Fall	
<i>Viola spp.</i>	Violet		Spring or Fall	Divide by hand.