

Fact sheet – Dividing Perennials

Perennials are plants that return every year , are usually quite hardy and form clumps that grow and spread. They respond well to division because it helps the roots to spread and regenerate new growth. If you do not divide plants preferably every 2 to 3 years they will become root bound and produce less new growth and flowers.

The best time to divide plants is in the Spring as the new shoots emerge or in the Autumn as they die back. You can move well established clumps at other times as long as you cut back the growth, replant and keep watered.

How to Split and Divide

Firstly, think about the root system because that is what you must protect.



Sedums have a tap root which is fleshy and deep rooted.



Campanula have a shallow root system that runs just under the surface of the soil.



Hemerocallis form clumps of bulbous roots quite deep



Geraniums and Heuchera sit proud of the soil.



Echinacea and Tradescantia form clumps with separate buds that are quite easy to separate.



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Stage 1

Dig up a clump with a fork.

Shake off the soil , you may need to wash off compacted soil if it is heavy compacted soil.

Trim the roots by a third to promote new roots. Reduce the leaf area to only minimal shoots.

Stage 2

Look for a natural division by pulling the plant apart.

Where you see a division cut into sections with a sharp knife. Sedums do not always show a natural division but you can safely slice into the root. Plant each section separately.

You now have the start of your new plants.

Stage 3

You can now replant these in the garden spacing them out to grow or pot them up to grow over Winter and plant out in the Spring. If you decide to pot them up just keep them slightly moist but do not over water. Watering once a Week is fine. If you replant water them after planting but then leave them to over Winter.

These guidelines are based on you dividing your existing plants and the techniques are appropriate for most Perennials.

But thinking about buying new Perennials. These can work out very expensive if you are wanting to plant in groups of 3 or 5 or perhaps even more.

If you want to create impact you need a minimum of 3 and perhaps another 3 of the same variety along a border which moves the eye along your planting scheme.

So the small pots in garden centers are about 2.95 each x 3 = 9.00 Euro ish or x 5 = 15 euro ish.

TOP TIP

I suggest you buy a large pot at around 12.00 euro ish. Divide them and make more plants for less. You will also find that the larger pots have a more established root system suitable for dividing. If you have a gardening buddy you can buy 2 large pots of different plants and share your divisions.