

How Often to Divide Perennials

University of Idaho
Extension
Kootenai County
958 South Lochsa St
Post Falls, ID 83854

Phone: (208) 292-2525
FAX: (208) 292-2670
E-mail: kootenai@uidaho.edu
Web: uidaho.edu/kootenai



Some perennials need division frequently, while others do better if left undisturbed. The list below illustrates how often to divide many common perennials. These recommendations assume suitable growing conditions and overall healthy plants.

Plants that need division every 1-3 years

Achillea – yarrow
Anchusa – bugloss
Anthemis – hardy marguerite
Artemisia – wormwood
Aster – aster
Delphinium – Delphinium
Iris – bearded iris
Monarda – bee balm
Phlox – phlox
Physostegia – false dragonhead
Primula – primrose

Plants that need division every 6-10 years or do not like to be disturbed

Alchemilla – lady’s mantle
Brunnera – Siberian bugloss
Cimicifuga – snakeroot
Echinops – globe thistle
Epimedium – bishop’s hat
Geranium – hardy geranium
Hemerocallis – daylily
Hosta – hosta
Iberis – candytuft
Iris – Siberian iris
Ligularia – ligularia
Limonium – statice
Lysimachia – loosestrife
Nepeta – catmint
Polygonatum – Solomon’s seal
Pulmonaria – lungwort
Salvia – meadow sage
Sedum – stonecrop
Thalictrum – meadowrue
Trollius – globeflower
ornamental grasses

Plants that need division every 4-5 years

Armeria – sea thrift
Astilbe – astilbe
Campanula – bellflower
Centaurea – perennial cornflower
Chelone – turtlehead
Coreopsis – tickseed
Dicentra exima – fern leaf bleeding heart
Echinacea – coneflower
Erigeron – fleabane
Heuchera – coral bells
Liatris – blazing-star
Lilium – true lilies
Rudbeckia – black-eyed-Susan
Scabiosa – pincushion flower
Solidago – goldenrod
Stachys – lamb’s ears
Veronica – speedwell

Plants that need division only every 10 or more years

Aconitum – monkshood
Anemone – anemone, windflower
Aruncus – goat’s beard
Asclepias – butterfly weed
Baptisia – wild indigo
Dicentra spectabilis – bleeding heart
Dictamnus – gas plant
Eryngium – sea holly
Euphorbia – spurge
Gypsophila – baby’s breath
Hibiscus – hibiscus
Paeonia – peony
Papaver – Oriental poppy
Platycodon – balloon flower
Thermopsis – false lupine

Deadheading, Shaping and Shearing Perennials
For rebloom, longer bloom or better overall appearance

Perennials to deadhead – remove individual spent flowers or flower stalks from these plants for rebloom or continuous bloom

Achillea – yarrow
Alchemilla – lady’s mantle
Catanache – cupid’s dart
Centranthus ruber – red and white Valerian
Digitalis – foxglove
Erigeron – fleabane
Gaillardia – blanket flower
Gypsophila – baby’s breath
Heliopsis – false sunflower
Lavender – lavender
Leucanthemum x superbum – Shasta daisy
Lobelia – lobelia, cardinal flower
Lychnis – rose campion, Maltese cross
Lythrum – purple loosestrife
Penstemon – penstemon
Phlox – garden phlox
Platycodon – balloon flower
Redbeckia hirta – gloriosa daisy
Salvia – salvia, sage
Veronica – speedwell

Deadhead to improve overall appearance

Aubrieta – Aubrieta
Ajuga – bugleweed
Aurinia – basket of gold
Aruncus – goat’s beard
Astilbe – Astilbe, false Spiraea
Bergenia – Bergenia
Doronicum – leopard’s bane
Echinops – globe thistle
Geranium – hardy geranium
Helleborus – Lenten rose; wait until after seed sets
Hemerocallis – daylily
Heuchera – coral bells
Hosta – hosta
Iris – iris, bearded
Liatris – spike gayfeather
Ligularia – Ligularia
Lily – true lilies
Paeonia – peony
Phlox – creeping phlox
Stachys – lamb’s ear

Perennials to shape into rounded forms to give structure to the garden

Baptisia – false indigo
Euphorbia polychroma – cushion spurge
Linum – blue flax
Malva – malva, to prevent self-seeding
Monarda – bee balm
Oenothera fruiticosa – sundrops

Perennials to shear to the ground to stimulate new foliage and possible rebloom

Aconitum – monkshood
Alcea – hollyhock, to control rust, too
Alchemilla – lady’s mantle
Aquilegia – columbine
Armeria – seathrift, cut to basal growth
Aster – spring aster
Brunnera – Siberian bugloss
Campanula – bellflower, cut to basal growth
Corydalis – corydalis, late summer dormant
Delphinium hybrids – delphinium
Dianthus – carnations, pinks, to basal growth
Dicentra – bleeding heart, summer dormant
Geranium – hardy geranium
Lupinus – lupine
Monarda – bee balm
Nepeta – catmint
Papaver – Oriental poppy
Primula – primrose, summer dormant
Pulmonaria – lungwort
Pyrethrum – painted daisy
Sidalcea – miniature hollyhock
Solidago – goldenrod
Trollius – globe flower

Plants not to deadhead – leave seed heads of these plants for winter interest and birds

Agastache – anise hyssop
Anemone x hybrid – Japanese anemone
Cimicifuga – snakeroot
Echinacea – purple coneflower
Perovskia – Russian sage
Rudbeckia – black-eyed-Susan
Sedum ‘Autumn Joy’
ornamental grasses

PREPARING PERENNIALS FOR WINTER

I University of Idaho
Extension
Kootenai County
958 South Lochsa St
Post Falls, ID 83854

Phone: (208) 292-2525
FAX: (208) 292-2670
E-mail: kootenai@uidaho.edu



Remove all flower stalks from these perennials, but let foliage at the base remain:

Achillea (Yarrow)	Erigeron (Fleabane)
Anchusa (Bugloss)	Heuchera (Coral-bells)
Anemone	Monarda (Bee-balm)
Anthemis (Camomile)	Oenothera (Sundrops)
Artemisia	Pyrethrum (Painted Daisies)
Aster (hardy)	Rudbeckia (Coneflower)
Campanula (Bellflower)	Scabiosa
Chrysanthemum	Shasta Daisy
Coreopsis	Statice
Delphinium	Stokesia
Digitalis (Foxglove)	Thalictrum (Meadow-rue)
Doronicum (Leopardsbane)	Veronica (Speedwell)

Remove all growth from these:

Aconitum (Monkshood)	Gypsophila (Baby's-breath)
Astilbe	Hollyhocks
Baptisia (Indigo)	Lathyrus (Sweet-pea)
Boltonia	Liatrus (Gayfeather)
Centaurea (Bachelor button)	Linum (Perennial Flax)
Chelone (Turtle-heart)	Lupine
Dicentra (Bleeding-heart)	Peony
Dictamnus (Gasplant)	Physostegia (False Dragonhead)
Echinops (Globe-thistle)	Platycodon (Balloonflower)
Eupatorium (Joe-Pye-Weed)	Polemonium (Jacob's-Ladder)
Gaillardia	Thermopsis
Geum	

Do not touch the following:

Alyssum (Basket of Gold)	Helianthemum (Sunrose)
Aquilegia (Columbine)	Iberis (Candytuft)
Arabis (Rock-cress)	Myosotis (Forget-me-not)
Armeria (Thrift)	Nepeta (Catnip, Catmint)
Aubretia (Rock-cress)	Papaver (Poppies)
Carnation (hardy)	Phlox subulata (Creeping Phlox)
Cerastium	Plumbago (Leadwort)
Dianthus (Pinks)	Primula (Primrose)
Ferns	Saxifraga
Gallium odoratum (Sweet Woodruff)	Sedum (Stonecrop)
Hedera (English Ivy)	Trollius (Globeflower)
	Vinca (Periwinkle)

Hosta – cut out outer leaves but let inner leaves remain.

Day Lilies – Remove flower shoots and cut foliage down to six inches.

Iris, Bearded – Cut back to six inches