

## DIVIDING CLUMPS OF PERENNIALS

Many perennial plants need to be divided periodically to promote vigorous growth and to prevent them from crowding out neighboring plants. To begin the process, water the area for a few days before digging to make the job easier. Then dig the entire clump out of the soil and carefully divide it into several sections. A sharp knife can be used to make small cuts in the root ball to make the separation easier. One or two new clumps can be placed back into the original planting hole and the rest can be planted elsewhere.

Dividing perennials is often done in the spring in Michigan, when plants are dormant. However, the best season for dividing will vary according to the growing habit of the plant.

Some plants that will benefit from spring dividing include asters and chrysanthemums, which should be divided every two or three years to promote vigorous growth and flowering. Examples of plants that should be divided in the fall are peonies and bleeding hearts, although this should be done only if more plants are desired, and at most, only every 7 to 8 years. Otherwise they do best if left undisturbed. Similarly, avoid moving or dividing plants like baby's breath, balloon flower, butterfly weed, lupine and others with large tap roots.

The **Master Gardener Hotline** is open from April to October, Monday through Friday. Lines are available 9:00 am to noon and 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm at 888-678-3464

[https://www.canr.msu.edu/lawn\\_garden/](https://www.canr.msu.edu/lawn_garden/)

<https://www.canr.msu.edu/outreach/>