How Often to Divide Perennials

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 4-5 years
Armeria – sea thrift
Astilbe – astilbe
Campanula – bellflower
Centaurea – perennial cornflower
Chelone – turtlehead
Coreopsis – tickseed
Dentra 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 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 – Soloman’s seal
Pulmonaria – lungwort
Salvia – meadow sage
Sedum – stonecrop
Thalictrum – meadowrue
Trollius – globeflower
ornamental grasses

Plants that need division only every 10 or more years
Aconitum – monkshood
Anemone – anenome, windflower
Aruncus – goat’s beard
Asclepias – butterfly weed
Baptisia – wild indigo
Dicentra spectabilis – bleeding heart
Dictamus – 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
- Catananche – 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

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 fruticosa – 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

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

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

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

ornamental grasses