

# How Often to Divide Perennials

**University of Idaho**  
Extension  
Kootenai County

1250 W Ironwood, Ste 107  
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814

Phone: (208) 292-2525  
Plant Clinic: (208) 292-1377  
E-mail: [kootenaimg@uidaho.edu](mailto:kootenaimg@uidaho.edu)  
Web: [uidaho.edu/kootenai](http://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 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

**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