



Perennial Care

Soil Preparation

A new bed takes time! None of us in the area are blessed with great soil unless we've worked at it. Here are three rules to follow.

Add organic matter. Most of our native soil is heavy red clay, so DON'T ADD PEAT MOSS! You will create an environment that will probably stay too soggy. Use our soil conditioner, mushroom compost, mulched leaves, and/or your own garden compost. When you start to see lots of earthworms, you're doing great work!

Prepare the bed ahead of time whenever possible. It's great when you can improve the whole bed of soil, and not just the planting hole.

Continue to improve your soil.

Make a fall and winter chore of adding your fallen leaves to your beds. In the spring, before new growth begins, add additional layers of organic matter.

Planting

Remove the container, loosen the root ball, and set in your prepared hole. Follow our detailed procedures in our GardenGuide if you have any questions.

Fertilizing

This is often the most neglected part of gardening. We recommend a slow-release flower fertilizer such as Barnyard at planting time, and additional applications 6 - 8 weeks apart during the growing season. For established plants, the first application should be when new growth begins in the spring. Always water plants after applying granular fertilizer. To perk up plants during times of stress (such as drought, hot weather, or blooming season), you may use a water soluble fertilizer such as Peter's or Miracle-Gro every 2 weeks. Make sure your plants are moist before using the fertilizer.

Watering

Water in by hand when planting. Thoroughly soak plantings every 3-4 days (with no rain) during summer. Watering in the winter is not recommended.

Deadheading (Cutting Back)

To keep **long-blooming perennials** prolific, be sure to cut spent flowers off. Cut at the point where the stem begins (at the base of the plant.) Some of the plants need the "haircut" approach, where you trim across the top of the plant. Groundcover verberna is an example. It rejuvenates the plant and blooming resumes.

One-time bloomers (short period) can be cut back halfway after flowering to neaten the garden.

To make **tall-blooming perennials** flower on shorter stems, (in case they have a tendency to flop), you may cut back 1/3 to 1/2 of the plant about 2 to 4 weeks before expected bloom time. After frost knocks back your perennials, the foliage can safely be cut back on most perennials to about 3 inches. Check our signs on each plant for exceptions to this and other pruning tips listed above.

The first signs of plants needing dividing are reduced blooming and dying in the middle. **Spring-flowering perennials** generally are best divided in the fall. **Summer** and **Fall-blooming perennials** generally are best divided in the Spring before new growth begins.

Bloom Sampler

Winter - Very Early Spring

- Lenten Rose
- Candytuft
- Virginia Bluebells
- Creeping Phlox

Spring

- Astilbes
- Bleeding Hearts
- Coreopsis
- Dianthus
- Irises
- Lily of the Valley
- Shasta Daisy
- Yarrow

Summer

- Butterfly Weed

- Calla Lilies
- Daylilies
- Gaura
- Garden Phlox
- Hardy Begonia
- Lantana
- Plumbago
- Purple Coneflower
- Rudbeckia
- Salvias
- Shasta Daisies

Autumn

- Anemone
- Asters
- Chrysanthemums
- Joe-Pye Weed
- Mexican Sage
- Sedum

- full sun
- partial shade
- shade