

## Preparing Your Garden for the Season

Cut back any dead foliage from last season's perennials, with care right at the ground level. You can also rake gently to remove dead leaves or other debris around all plants.

**Perennials are plants** that die back in the winter but re-appear each season, to bloom once for a defined period of time. Now is the time to prepare your perennials for the season ahead - as their new foliage emerges from the soil.

**Divide perennials** that bloom in summer and fall. Do not divide spring blooming perennials, peonies or iris until later in the season. If you have doubt about blooming time, check out our plant search for specific information about a perennial.

### **Here are some general directions for dividing:**

Dig a large clump of soil around the plant and lift it gently to preserve the root ball. Lay it on its side and use a sharp shovel to slice through the plant. You can make several slices if you have a large clump and want to divide it more than once. Replant immediately and water. Be sure to plant to the same depth as the original undivided plant.

**Grasses can be divided** in the same way throughout the month of May. Their roots are very hardy, so don't be afraid to cut them into several smaller clumps if they have gotten quite large.

If you don't have early blooming perennials in your garden, now is a good time to add some. Consider Pasque flower, Primrose, Lungwort, Jacob's Ladder,

Spring Anemone, Geum, and Bleeding Heart and more. Put stakes and supports in place for the larger summer and fall blooming when the plants are about 6" high.

**Remove spring weeds** from the garden when the soil is dry enough. Be sure to use a good hoe.

**Plant Summer Bulbs:** Dahlias, Cannas, Elephant Ears, and other summer bulbs that can be started in early spring. You can plant these in pots to get them started before taking them outdoors.

Sink the pots right in your garden after mid-May when the threat of nighttime frost is past.

**Start marigold seeds** indoors for the flower border and vegetable garden. They are a natural insect deterrent and are easy to grow from seed in trays in a sunny window. This is an especially great activity if you have small children just learning to love the garden.

## **Plant Cool Season Annuals**

Now is the time to plant cool season annuals for early color in your garden. Annuals do not survive over the winter, but once planted, they provide continuous color. Cool season annuals like only the cooler soil and cooler temperatures of spring. These include Pansies, Violas, Ranunculus, and Snapdragons and more.