

Dividing and Planting Peonies, Iris and Daylilies



Peonies

Dividing

- **Divide and replant in the fall only when they become crowded, usually in ten to fifteen years. Never divide a plant that is less than three years old, because transplanting upsets plants and retards flowering for several years.**
- **Carefully dig around and under clumps taking care not to break off the roots, particularly the taproot.**
- **With a heavy stream of water, wash off any soil that clings to clumps. Strip off the leaves. Cut tubers apart with a sharp knife that has been sterilized over a flame or in alcohol. Each section should have three to five eyes, with a taproot attached to each tuber.**
- **Dust division cut with fungicide to keep cut free of disease organisms.**

Planting

- **Peonies do best in full sun, protected from strong winds, but with good air circulation.**
- **Prepare planting area by spading in organic matter—compost, well-rotted manure or peat moss.**
- **Dig the hole 18" across and 18" deep. Space plants at least two feet apart.**
- **Fill the hole one-half full of soil, mixed thoroughly with 10-6-4 fertilizer.**
- **Plant tuber with uppermost eye not more than 2" below ground level.**
- **Put a little soil around tuber, water thoroughly. Fill hole with remaining soil and press down firmly.**
- **Water again to further settle tuber.**
- **Once planted, do not remove foliage until plant dies back in the fall.**

Iris

Dividing

- **Iris should be divided every two to five years, when they become crowded.**
- **Divide the offshoots from the rhizome in late summer/early fall after blooming. Cut leaves to one-third of their full height.**
- **Dig under and around a clump of rhizomes, carefully, and lift entire clump. Wash away soil.**
- **Cut rhizomes with sharp knife having at least one growing point, or fan of leaves, a few inches of healthy rhizome and a number of well-developed roots on each division.**

Planting

- **Iris should be planting in full sun with good air circulation.**
- **Prepare soil to at least 18" in depth, working in organic material—compost, well-rotted manure or peat moss.**
- **Dig a hole large enough to hold one rhizome or clump of rhizomes.**
- **Form a cone in the center of the hole for a planting base. The height of the cone is determined by soil type.**
 - **medium soil—makes cone high enough so rhizome is just below ground level**
 - **light/well-drained soil—build a low cone so rhizome is 2 inches below ground level**
 - **heavy soil—make cone so rhizome is slightly above ground level**
- **Place rhizome on cone, parallel with ground surface and carefully spread roots around cone. Do not wad roots.**
- **Fill hole with soil and firmly press in place around rhizome; water thoroughly soaking soil.**

Daylilies

Dividing

- Daylilies should be divided every six to ten years, or when they become overcrowded.
- Plants can be divided anytime during the growing season. However digging them in mid summer will diminish the show of flowers.
- Dig daylilies about 12" from the edge of clump, carefully digging and lifting around the clump until the entire clump is exposed.
- Cut back all but a few inches of above ground growth (unless division is done early spring when new growth is just a few inches high).
- Separate the clump using your fingers or two spading forks.
- Wash as much soil as possible from the roots.
- Using a sharp knife, cut clump into divisions each containing three to five eyes or shoots. Protect the exposed roots from sun and wind by covering with burlap, placing in a plastic bag or putting them in a shallow bucket of water while preparing the soil for planting.

Planting

- Prepare soil by working in organic material—compost, well-rotted manure or peat moss to a depth of 8–10 inches.
- Depending on length of roots, dig the hole, deep enough so that the planted clump will be about one-half inch higher than the surrounding bed.
- Remove a division from its protection, clean off any dead foliage or damaged roots.
- Spread roots out, position division and fill hole with soil. Press down firmly.
- Water thoroughly.
- If a period of sunny, hot weather occurs, protect the transplant until weather cools. Monitor moisture during hot, dry periods.

Garden Questions

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