

Divide Hostas and Daylilies in March!

Late February and early March are great times to divide perennial plants such as hosta and daylilies. Hosta, for example, will have well developed eyes or newly developing shoots just under the surface waiting to push through the soil with the first continuing warm spell. This is one of the most popular perennials and also the easiest to divide and grow. Follow just a few rules and you can assure yourself a good supply of hosta throughout your garden. First you must know where the clumps of hosta are under the mulch. Rake back the existing mulch on a good warm day to expose the eyes. You will need at least 3 good eyes together to form a nice clump that has enough root system to assure survival. Saw through the root mass with a sharp knife or soil knife. The soil knife is a favorite tool of my perennial ladies here as well as many avid gardeners. After dividing, dig a hole where you want to relocate the new hosta, work in a little compost and some rock phosphate to help the plant root in. Remember these plants must be watered in, regardless of cold weather to assure the soil settles in well and removes all air gaps. A good layer of mulch – 3 inches deep – should be applied after the initial watering and then watered well again after the mulch application.

Daylilies are also very popular and easy to divide. The procedure is the same except instead of 'eyes' we call the divisions 'fans.' You will need to leave at least 2 fans (preferably 3) together to insure blooms for the next year. Daylilies are heavy feeders, and I would suggest using a little Plant Tone mixed in the soil when transplanting. Make sure that you do not put your transplants too deep as this will stop blooming for years to come. Mulch to 3 inches but do not cover the foliage. Doing this early in the season will allow for good blooming, as well as foliage growth over the summer months. Enjoy the garden!

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