

Autumn Plant Division- To encourage healthier growth and create new plants.

As we enter the winter months and our gardens start to look a little bare as the herbaceous perennials die down, now is a great time to create new plants by division. The majority of herbaceous plants can be divided from autumn and into winter when they become dormant. Examples of plants that lend themselves to this technique include *Hemerocallis*, *Hosta*, *Eryngium* and *Geranium* to name a few. Try to pick a day when the soil is fairly dry but importantly not frozen, select a healthy plant that will benefit from some rejuvenation and injection of vigour. You will need a garden fork to lift the clump with as much root as possible taking care to limit damage to crown or centre of the plant and then give the plant a good shake so you can see the roots. If possible using just your hands break the plant into two or more sections, each plantlet should have roots attached to the crown. Larger clumps with thicker roots will be easier to divide by using two forks back to back and then lever the clump apart. A top tip is not to be too greedy by separating plants into clumps that are too small, they must have roots attached to each section and viable vegetative buds that are often torpedo shaped bursting with stored energy. With larger clumps you can plant them directly in the garden ideally with a helping of garden compost so those buds are just under the surface. Smaller clumps can be potted up and taken care of over winter by placing in a coldframe, cool greenhouse or sheltered spot. Whichever technique used always water them in to settle but do this in the morning so excess water can drain away before the colder night time period. With a bit of luck you have beautiful blooms in the Spring and Summer but don't forget to protect from pesky slugs that will love to make a winter home in those clumps of overwintering plants.

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