

Divide Iris, Day Lilies, Spring Bulbs Now

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August is the month to divide perennials such as day lilies, iris, and the spring flowering bulbs, like tulips, daffodils and crocuses. These plants tend to become overgrown after a number of years and flowering is reduced.

Carefully dig the plant clumps from the ground. Shake off as much soil as possible. Gently scrub off the remaining soil so that the root structure may be examined. Spread the bulbs out to dry. Be sure to label them so you know what is what.

Examine the iris and daylily roots (rhizomes). With a sharp knife, cut out all injured or diseased parts and discard them. Then divide the rhizomes into clumps, having a large piece of rhizome and at least two fans of leaves. Large divisions will flower next year. Small divisions may take an extra year.

After they have dried sort the bulbs by size, discarding the diseased bulbs. The largest bulbs will flower next spring. You may wish to plant the smaller ones in a nurse bed to develop for a year or two.

Since perennials will occupy the same spot in the garden for several years, work the soil carefully, adding bone meal and organic matter to improve fertility and drainage.

Dust the rhizomes and bulbs with a good fungicide before planting. The rhizomes should be spaced 12 to 18 inches apart, and planted one to two inches deep in the prepared soil. Water them in thoroughly with a trickle hose.

Plant the bulbs at the correct depth. This varies from type to type. Plant in groups for immediate effect next spring. If the soil has been worked up well, bulbs can be planted by hand, or use a bulb planter.

If you are planning to start a new flower garden, plants, divisions, and bulbs are available in garden centers now.

Get started now before the fall rush begins. You'll be glad next year that you did.

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Lesco 500 Fairway Mower - 900 hrs. with Onan gasoline engine — \$5,000; 5 - Lesco Cutting Reels — \$2,000; 5 - Lesco Thatching Reels — \$1,700; Salsco Tow Type Aerifier, 60" wide, Kohler Engine 4" depth with 1/2, 5/8, and 3/4 tines — \$5,000; Zamboni Ice Resurfacer, 3 PT hitch model (like new) — \$3,800.

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