**How to Dig, Divide, and Move Perennial Flowers** – Don Kinzler, NDSU Extension Agent,

Cass County Horticulture

Perennial flowers, which means they grow back each year, are star features in flowerbeds and landscapes.

* “Dividing” means splitting a perennial clump into sections and replanting.
* Why do we divide perennials?
  + To maintain vigor and remedy crowding
  + Manage size
  + Produce more plants
  + Move to new location
* How to know if a perennial needs dividing:
  + Center of clump becomes bare
  + Not blooming as prolifically as it once did
  + Clump splays apart at center
* How often should perennials be divided on average?
  + Every 1-3 years:
    - Allium, aster, astilbe, penstemon, monarda, catmints (Nepeta), coral bells (Heuchera), delphinium, German bearded iris, Joe-pye weed, creeping phlox, dianthus, Shasta daisy, true bulbous lily, hardy chrysanthemum
  + Every 4-5 years:
    - Campanula, black-eyed Susan (Rudbeckia), gaillardia, daylily, coneflower (Echinacea), lamb’s ears, liatris, tall garden phlox, ornamental grasses, sedum, bergenia.
  + Every 6-10 years:
    - Bleeding heart, brunnera, perennial geranium, globe thistle, hosta, Siberian iris, lady’s mantle (Alchemilla), ligularia, thalictrum, poppy, perennial salvia
  + Rarely; 10 years or more:
    - Balloon flower, clematis, columbine, baptisia, gas plant (Dictamnus), goat’s beard, helleborus, lupine, milkweed (Asclepias), peony, pasque flower, Russian sage, evening primrose, trillium, yucca
* How do you know what month to dig, divide, move perennials?
  + Rule of thumb: Do the operation during the season *opposite when it’s flowering or normally flowers.*
  + If it blooms in spring or early summer: dig, divide, move in fall (about Labor Day.)
    - Bleeding heart, peony, tulips, iris (can do from August on)
  + If it blooms in mid-summer or fall: dig, divide, move in spring.
    - Hosta, ornamental grasses, fall aster, hardy mums, tall garden phlox, many more.
  + Some types are flexible: daylilies can be divided almost anytime, but late summer, early fall is preferred. Also true bulbous lilies (fall is best.)
* For detailed information on digging, dividing perennials, including preferred times, visit University of Minnesota website [Dividing perennials.pdf - Google Drive](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1S6yqog4CnN_zqwG02uiOo28HT-is_LlP/view)