

TRANSPLANTING PEONIES

Peonies are grown for their large, very fragrant May blooming flowers which come in shades of white, pink, and red-purple. They are dependable, long-lived perennials, although in the Summer they look more like a shrub than a flower.

Peonies are normally left in the same location for several years. In fact, they are generally best left undisturbed and moved only when necessary. If it becomes necessary to move or divide a peony, care should be used because if done improperly, the plant may never flower again.

The proper time to transplant or divide peonies is in late Fall. The first step is to prepare the new site. The soil should be deeply worked to a depth of a foot or more. Add bone meal at the rate of 1/4 cup for each division. Peonies prefer a well-drained but moist site in sunny location. It may be necessary to add organic matter such as peat moss or manure to sandy soils. When digging up the plant, lift the entire plant at one time. If dividing, shake soil away from the roots so a clean cut can be made. The most vigorous division comes from the outer edge of the plant. With a sharp knife, divide the plant. Peony divisions should have a minimum of 3-5 growing tips or eyes, and larger bumps are desirable when possible.

Plant the division at the same level it was previously planted. Peony eyes should be no more than 1" below the soil surface. If the plant is placed too shallowly, it may suffer winter kill. If planted too deeply, the plant may not bloom. Make sure the soil is firmly packed. Water the new plant well. If it settles unevenly, it should be replanted.

Michigan State University Extension, Master Gardener Training Manual, Annuals & Perennials, P. 78.

The **Master Gardener Hotline** is open from April to October, Monday through Friday. Lines are available 9:00 am to noon and 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm at 888-678-3464

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