



## Dividing Ornamental Grasses

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**How will I know my ornamental grass needs dividing?** Divide it when the center has begun to die out and all the new growth occurs around the perimeter of the clump. Also, if the clump has become too large for the space where it's planted, or if it's crowding other plants, it's time to divide it.

**What time of year should I divide it?** It's best to divide grasses in the spring, right after they've sprouted new growth. Then your new divisions will have lots of time to establish new roots. Spring is also best because the top growth of the grass will be smaller, and the soil is usually moister.

**How do I divide it?** Ornamental grasses can have dense, massive root systems, so be aware this project is going to take time and muscle. Wear a sturdy pair of gloves! Dig up the entire root ball of the grass. The best tool for this is a spade with a sharp digging edge, a spading fork, or both. It's fine if you have to dig the root ball up a portion at a time. Once the root ball is out of the ground, cut away the dead center of the grass as you divide it into sections. The larger the root ball, the more sections you'll have. To cut the root ball into sections, use a pruning saw, a carpenter's saw; or for some very large root balls, a chain saw or electric hedge trimmer may be necessary. For smaller root balls, pruning shears may be used to cut it into sections.

**What can I do with all these divisions of my grass?** You'll probably want to plant one of the divisions back into its original hole. The remaining divisions of your ornamental grass can be replanted into other areas of your garden, or you may want to share some with your neighbors and friends. It's also fine to pot them into individual containers and grow them on for a summer until you find homes for them. They also look great in ornamental containers on your porch or patio.

**How do I care for newly transplanted grasses?** Water them regularly, deeply soaking the roots each time. Plant them in the appropriate sun exposure according to variety.

**For more information on this topic or any others related to perennial gardening, please ask one of our knowledgeable perennial team members.**