

Take some extra steps when planting perennials this late

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Transplanting and dividing perennials should be done at the end of August and early September for best success. However, that doesn't always seem to work out for me, so I was transplanting perennials this past weekend.

I was also finally planting some trees and shrubs that I bought at a plant sale this past spring! I am a little behind but every time I thought about planting this summer, it was too dry to take a chance so I just kept them watered.

I know that I am not the only one who has held stuff over from spring - gardeners do it all of the time, right!

Anyways, I was able to plant and transplant and then have a perfect rain on Monday that really helped.

However, I am not finished watering. If it gets dry for the next few weeks, I will have to water everything I transplanted or planted.

Back to the perennials; the later you transplant or plant in the fall, the greater the chance of heaving. Let me explain.

When perennials are transplanted/planted late August, they have a better chance of establishing the root system.

Those that are planted now won't have much time to develop this root system and will be more likely to be subjected to heaving. As the soil freezes and thaws, it pushes the roots out of the ground, exposing them to drying air and consequential death.

The key when transplanting/planting this late is to make sure that as the ground freezes in November, mulch the around the plant with approximately eight to ten inches of mulch.

This helps to stabilize the soil and prevents heaving of the plants. In addition, keep watering them until the ground freezes, especially if we don't get rain.

I truly believe that this is one of the reasons people lose their fall mums.

Think about it; we plant them in containers or in the ground and enjoy them until they finish blooming. Then we have a tendency to simply forget about them.

The root system won't survive the winter if it dries out or if heaved out of the ground. Therefore, follow the same suggestion as above - mulch and keep watering.

This may not be the best time of the year to plant or transplant perennials but hey, there are great sales at garden centers that we can't pass up, right!

In addition, the weather is much more conducive to working outside than it was in August and I can fix most of the flaws I saw this past season by moving a few perennials here and there.



Transplant summer blooming perennials such as yarrow in the fall, water thoroughly after planting



Sedum transplants ready to go into the ground