

# Perennial Gardening

## The Do's and Don'ts of perennials



**What are perennials?** Perennials are plants that live 2 or more years and are not woody. The parts of the plant that are above ground die back every year, but the roots remain alive.

### Where do perennials get planted?

Not all perennials are considered the same. Sun loving perennials require at least 6 hours of sunlight while shade loving require less than 4. Soil type requirements vary from heavy clay to sandy soils. And the ability of watering should also be considered so plants are receiving the correct amount. A drought tolerant plant will require little water after it is established.

### How are perennials planted?

After selecting the correct placement according to soil and water requirements, dig your hole to the same depth of the root ball, and 3 times wider. Place one *Agriform* tablet into the hole, slightly working it into the soil. Remove the plant from the container and inspect the roots, if there are circling roots around the root ball, carefully loosen or score the roots for proper growth. After backfilling the hole, and gently pressing the soil into place, water the plants with a mixture of Root Stimulator, at a rate of 3 TBSP per gallon of water. Pour the entire gallon of water on each perennial plant slowly so it will sink in. Perennials can be planted from early spring to late fall.



### Ongoing maintenance

For perennials to be at their best, you must water, fertilize and maintain properly. The plants will need at least 1" of water a week. When watering, run a hose at a slow trickle on each plant for about 10 minutes, 2-3 times a week (water the soil, not the leaves of the plant). After 6 weeks, decrease the frequency to just once a week during the first year. While you may be tempted to not water your perennials after they are established, watering every 10-14 days is a benefit for the health of your plant. A yearly fertilizer application of *Sustane* will give your plants the needed nutrition for the growing season. Applying *Sustane winterizer* to your plants before the soil freezes, will also give the plant roots the needed food to allow for premium growth in the spring. Mulch your plants to a depth of 2" to aid in conserving water and deter weed growth.

Many perennials need regular deadheading and thinning. Deadheading is simply removing spent flowers to allow the plant to rejuvenate more blooms. Thinning and dividing is a process done in the fall. After several hard frosts, perennials will start to die back. When plants are showing yellowing and browning leaves, it is time to cut back the plant. Most plants should be cut back to 2-4" from the ground. Applying a layer of mulch over the plant at the time of soil freeze up will give the plant an extra layer of protection for the winter. Remember, to push the mulch back though as temperature increase in the spring!