



Tony Glover
Regional Extension Agent
News Release

Dividing Hosta

Question: I had several hosta plants die during the drought last year but in a couple of wetter spots they are in good shape. When is the latest I can safely divide them and how do I do it?

Answer: The best time to divide hostas is in the early fall (before hard freezes occur) or in the spring before the leaves unfold. However, hostas can be successfully divided at any time that they can be dug. They will need much more care if divided during summer heat. Divide them by cutting away a section of a clump with its roots or by lifting the clump and carefully separating. Use a clean, sharp tool and replant the new plants quickly and water them well. Space plants 1 to 3 feet apart, allowing room for growth. Hostas will do best when left undisturbed in the same spot for a few years before dividing again.

Plant your new divisions in a semi shady area with moist but well drained soil. The first year is critical to root development and you will need to water them regularly. Very little fertilizer is needed or recommended but a half rate of slow release fertilizer is alright. Also, to help these new divisions along, remove developing flower stalks as soon as noticed. When the plant starts developing flowers it will divert needed energy from new foliage and root growth to flower production.

If you really love hosta, be sure to visit the Hosta Glade at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens. It was completely redone last year and is already looking good this year. They have plans to become a "Display Garden" for the American Hosta Society. This would be a great honor for the BBG as there are only 16 such gardens throughout the entire United States. The requirements are strict and will take about three years to fulfill. For more information about growing hostas in the deep South visit: <http://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheets/HGIC1165.htm>.

For more about this topic please contact Tony Glover, Regional Extension Agent-Home Horticulture, Home Gardens and Home Pest Management at the St. Clair County Extension Office at (205) 338-9416 or email gloveta@auburn.edu.

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work in agriculture and home economics, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, and other related acts, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Alabama Cooperative Extension System (Alabama A&M University and

Auburn University) offers educational programs, materials, and equal opportunity employment to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, veteran status, or disability. Visit our website at www.aces.edu/StClair.