

Plant Perennials in the Fall

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It may seem counterintuitive, but the best time to plant perennials is in early fall – late September and October. Here are three good reasons to plant perennials in the fall:

#1 Strong root system: Plants know that fall is not the time to produce new foliage and flowers, so they will spend their energy growing good roots and will be well established by spring when they are expected to make. (With fall-blooming perennials, you may want to cut off the flowers when you plant them so the plants can spend their energy forming roots rather than seeds.)

#2 Less competition: Annuals, including many weeds, have completed their life cycles and are ready for the compost heap. So, there will be less competition for water and nutrients for perennials planted in the fall.

#3 Bargains in the fall: The perennials at the nursery won't look as beautiful as they do in the spring because they are closing down for the season, so you can probably get twice as many for the price.

Fall is also a good time to divide the perennials already growing in your garden and to share the excess plants with friends and neighbors. You can make this your primary fall gardening task rather than worrying about the traditional fall cleanup. Please remember to leave some stalks, seeds, and other debris for the insects, birds, and other critters when you do a “minor” fall cleanup.



Photo by Pat Lust

References:

Brooklyn Botanic Garden: Can I Plant Perennials in the Fall? –

https://www.bbg.org/article/ask_a_gardener_can_i_plant_perennials_in_the_fall?

Meadows Farms: Planting Perennials in the Fall -

<https://www.meadowsfarms.com/blog/excellent-fall-perennials/>