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Helpful Garden Tips – Plants and Planting*

*(*Disclaimer: Mary's is a greenhouse grower of plants and we don't currently offer landscape services. Greenhouse production is different than outside gardening. For professional advice, please consult a landscaper or full service garden center.)*

When is the best time to plant? Container grown perennials can be planted pretty much year round provided the ground is not frozen and ample moisture is available. However, the spring and fall are usually the best times to plant as the plants have time to establish before the hot summer months or before winter sets in. In this area, landscapers can plant all the way into December and resume planting some time in February depending on weather and type of plant material.

Do plants need to be hardened off before planting? We recommend that plants be acclimated to the weather before planting during the spring months. Plants have been grown in a greenhouse and may have had supplemental heat and protection from the cold. It is best to leave the plants outside in the containers for 4-7 days. This will allow them to adjust to outside conditions and they can also be brought inside should the temperatures drop considerably before planting. If planting in February up until the first of May, be prepared to cover tender plants if we are going to have a frost. Established perennials should be ok unless we have a late frost that might damage new spring growth.

How far apart do I plant? This depends on factors such as how big the plants will be at maturity or how fast you want a groundcover to fill in. A general rule for spacing is to allow the same distance between plants that the mature plant will be – if a plant gets 12" wide, plant them about 12" apart. Planting too close will necessitate dividing your perennials sooner. If you are planting a groundcover, factors to consider are cost, how fast do you want it to fill in and the vigor of the plant. Groundcovers can be spaced as close as 6" to as far as 24" depending on plant and location. A rule of thumb is 10-15" apart. *(See Helpful Garden Tips – Spacing and Planting Groundcovers for more info.)*