

Suggestions for handling established Perennials How to winterize them

By Tim Flood

Anemone-	cut back fall or spring
Aster	leave up for fall, cut back in spring
Astilbe	leave up for fall if you like to see the dried flower heads, or cut back in fall or spring
Brunnera	pull off dried foliage after frost kills it (this prevents any leaf disease from over-wintering on the plants)
Butteryfly Bush (a woody ornamental that is treated as a perennial here)	cut back in spring only, please
Caryopteris (a woody ornamental that is treated as a perennial here)	trim back in spring only, please
Catmint-	leave up for fall, cut back in spring
Columbine	pull off dried foliage after frost kills it in either fall or early spring
Coneflower	best cut off in fall and remove all old foliage (this prevents any leaf disease from over-wintering on the plants)
Coreopsis	leave up for fall (important) and cut back in spring (they hate to be cut in fall)
Daylily	cut back and pull off all foliage in fall (this prevents any leaf disease from over-wintering on the plants)
Fern	leave up for fall, cut back in spring
Geranium	cut back in fall or spring
Goldenrod	leave up for fall if wanted, cut back either fall or spring
Grasses	PLEASE leave all up for fall and don't cut back until spring
Heuchera (Coral Bells)	best left alone until spring, then in spring pull off only dried leaves, don't cut way back
Hosta	pull off old foliage after frost kills the leaves
Iris	cut back in fall or spring
Ladysmantle	cut back fall or spring

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Lungwort	cut back fall or very early spring
Peony	cut back in fall
Phlox	cut back in fall and remove all old foliage (this prevents any leaf disease from over-wintering on the plants)
Rudbeckia	cut back in fall or spring (the seed heads are great little bird feeders) But, if they had diseased foliage, it's best to cut off and remove in fall
Russian Sage	cut back in spring
Salvia	cut back fall or spring
Sedum	cut back in fall or spring (they look great in winter if you leave the taller varieties up)
Veronica	cut back in fall or spring
Woadwaxen	cut back in spring like you would a Spiraea

I hope that answers any questions you might have. Some people like to go out and just cut everything to the ground. When you do that, you have nothing to look at all winter long (and winter can be long in our area). Why not leave some of these plants alone and enjoy their dormant, spent flower heads or foliage as they sculpt the snow and add tons of winter interest to the landscape?

As with all perennials, it is always best to clean up any foliage that was diseased this past growing season as that will help eliminate re-infection next spring. Perennials love a fresh application of mulch in fall, as do most deciduous shrubs. If you are growing tender perennials in your yard, be sure and give those plants a few evergreen boughs or a covering of marsh hay after the ground has started to freeze to keep the ground frozen on those items all winter long. Freezing and thawing of perennials can cause them to start growing before they really should, and then when they freeze again, it can cause damage. The evergreen boughs or hay will prevent the freezing or thawing, and will prevent and damage. Newly planted perennials (especially those newly planted in the fall) really need to be mulched very well around the plants right after planting and then also mulched with evergreen boughs or marsh hay to prevent these plants from being heaved out of the ground by that freezing and thawing process. This is a necessary step to ensure good rooting in fall and to help them over-winter the best.