

# Peonies in the Fall

by Pat Stachon

September - a beautiful month. Time to plant new peonies or divide your old ones. Herbaceous peonies are best planted in the fall. This allows enough time for the small feeding roots to become established during our long winters. Plant in well drained soil amended with well rotted manure and or compost.

Most peonies prefer full sun and will tolerate a variety of soil conditions but will not thrive in a bog. They must have good drainage.

**DIVIDING:** Lift plant with a garden fork, clean the roots with fresh water, and allow to sit in the shade for a few hours before proceeding. The roots will be more pliable and easier to manage if left exposed for a little while.

Split the crown into bits of 4-5 buds showing using a sharp clean knife. A divided plant will rebound more quickly.

Flowering may or may not happen the following spring but be patient, it will resume the following year.

**REPLANTING:** It is said, that it is wise not to plant a peony where another was grown previously. It is probably due to the depletion of the soil, lack of trace elements, and an accumulation of soil pathogens left by the previous plant.

Place the peony in the hole, fill the area with fresh soil carefully to avoid air pockets, making sure that the buds have been planted at the final depth of ONLY 5 cm (2 inches). If it is planted too deeply the peony may not flower. Well rotted manure or compost around the plant will be most appreciated by your peony. If you have a few peonies they should be planted 90 cm (3 feet) apart. Water well. If you wish to fertilize, a suitable ratio is 20:20:20. A good organic fertilizer such as bonemeal or well rotted manure works well too. In the spring, while cleaning up after winter's wrath take care not to damage those beautiful emerging red buds of your new peony plant.

## A LIST OF 7 WEEKS OF PEONIES:

There are hundreds: I have mentioned only 4

Very early: last week of May Paeonia tenuifolia: The fern leaf peony.

Thread like leaves, dark red single flower.

Early: early June Dandy Dan. Semi -double, dark red flower, very robust

Mid-season mid June Julia Grant. Single, very bright pink

Late end of June Ann Cousins. A Canadian Peony, white double, needs staking, fragrant

There are many many more. Feast your eyes try [www.paeonia.com](http://www.paeonia.com)

Pat Stachon (Peony lover)