

Subject: Revision/Additional info re: Plant Swap article with photos

Garden Column for the Salisbury Post

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Rowan County Master Gardeners are preparing to host their 12th Annual Plant Swap and sale on Saturday morning, May 3rd. The swap is open to the public beginning at 9:00 a.m., however, the plant sale begins 8:30 a.m. concluding at 12:00 noon. The Master Gardener Plant swap and Sale is at the Agricultural Center on Old Concord Road in Salisbury. The swap and sale will be held under the Outdoor Learning Shelter and in the Greenhouse. Only perennial plants will be accepted for the swap; however, annuals, bulbs, seeds and perennials will be available at the sale. Perennial plants live for multiple years and many such as hostas, daylilies, dianthus and peonies benefit from division every three to four years. As plants mature and become crowded, the bloom quantity and quality decline. Division can also be used to restrict invasive perennials like bee balm, lambs ear and herbs in the mint family.

Now is an excellent time to divide perennials. The cool, overcast days experienced earlier this week is perfect lessening the shock of the plants

as they are being transplanted. Several methods of division can be employed depending on the plant characteristics. Use a sharp spade or knife to remove portions of the crown for perennials such as coral bells, ensuring that sufficient roots are available to support each new plant. For other perennials the result is more aesthetically pleasing when the entire plant

is dug up and divided into pieces, replanting one division in the original location. This works well with daylilies, hostas and sedum "Autumn Joy". Many other perennials drop seeds (columbine, sundrops, and blackberry lily) so that you need only dig up the wayward plants and relocate them. Creeping perennials like thyme often root sections away from the center of the plant. Carefully dig up the rooted section and disentangle it from the main plant. In all cases, prepare the new location(s) by loosening the soil and adding amendments if necessary. Plant the division at the same depth as the original plant and water thoroughly. It will be necessary to water the new plantings until they are established. Divide your perennials and bring any surplus plants to the swap. You'll go home with some new additions for your garden.

Those participating in the plant swap should follow these guidelines:

- *plants must be healthy, free from insects and disease, and in containers no larger than 1 gallon
- *containers must be labeled with plant name, growing conditions and name of person swapping plant
- *each person may swap up to 5 plants, but no more than 2 of the same type
- *there will be a \$1 fee per person to participate in the swap
- *plants obtained in the swap may be exchanged for those on the sale table
- *bring only plants that you would enjoy receive from the swap-avoid common

plants such tree seedlings, common liriope, ivy, etc.

The Master Gardeners have been nurturing a wonderful assortment of "gardeners choice" perennials for the sale. A selection of vines including the five leaf akebia, coral and gold flame honeysuckle, passion flower and crossvine, will be offered. There are selections of weigelia, gardenia, azalea, spirea, buddleia and many, many more. Prices range from \$3.00 to

\$8.00 for propagated perennials. Named hostas will be offered: prices are based on uniqueness of the variety. Come early for best selection. Proceeds support educational opportunities, projects and programs.

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