



CHRISTENSEN'S PLANT CENTER

Wholesale Supplier To Landscape Professionals

The Late, Late No-Show

Late summer to early fall is always a great time for us to plant (and divide) most perennials. The cooler air reduces stress on the foliage, while the still-warm soil allows the roots to grow.

Many of us will continue digging all the way through to October, as long as the ground hasn't yet frozen. Planting well into November is also not unheard of due to warming winter trends. Many perennials will tolerate such a late start, but there are others that have a habit of turning their noses (roots) up and keeling over.

The most notorious perennials in this finicky group include, but are not limited to: all roses, ornamental grasses (Miscanthus, Pennisetum, Fescue, and Helictotrichon), and low-growing ground cover (Ajuga and similar fleshy-leaved types). Any plants that are from bare-root or cell flat stock will also have a high mortality rate.



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[***Return to Archive***](#)



Frost upheaval aside for most plants, "wet feet" is the main culprit for the ones listed above. These perennials will rot quite easily if their roots haven't had sufficient time to spread before the wet November weather arrives as well as the next year's spring rains.

It's not that we need to avoid planting in November altogether, but it is worthwhile to note that most perennials would do best to have a decent root system in place before hibernating.

Game of chance aside, don't forget to mulch, as this will go a long way to protect the roots, yet take care to leave some room around the crowns to avoid suffocation during wet spells.

