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How to Rehabilitate Perennials and other Rescue Plants

At Mid-Summer in the Midwest growing season, many gardeners patiently wait for their crops to mature, examining every bloom. However, the itch to plant something new or add to our gardens may still be nagging at us. As a result, we often find ourselves in the “rescue” isle of our local nurseries with a new challenge. Unfortunately, many of these rescue plants have expired blooms, have been over or under-watered, are root bound or have some other malady, but this is where the curious gardener can learn and thrive. In this instructional, we share with you some tips for rehabilitating neglected nursery stock and other perennials.

Project Difficulty



Products You'll Need



Soil Master Soil Test Kit



Long Fibered Sphagnum Moss

Supplies You'll Need

- Plants that need some TLC

Detect the needs of the Nursery Stock or Rescue Plant

Too much sun?

Start by addressing the plant's light needs. Often shade is in short supply at nurseries and garden centers. They depend on the quick sale of plants to help keep them from frying in the sun. So the first thing to do is to give them a cool shady spot to hang out while you prepare for some rehab.



Did it get enough or maybe too much water?

Check the plant's water needs. Often you'll find neglected plants to be over-watered or under-watered. If you think that the plant is wilted and just needs a good drink, then remove it from the pot and place it in a bucket with a few inches of water for about thirty minutes. If the potting soil contains a lot of peat moss, it will need a refresh. Otherwise, simply watering may not penetrate the soil mixture enough to allow the roots to absorb water. We promote peat-free planting, but your plant may come in compacted peat soil, and once the peat dries out, it can

If the plant is overwatered then remove it from the pot and examine the roots for rot. When roots rot, the plant often appears it needs water. Leaves will start to wilt and yellow. This is because the decaying roots cannot deliver nutrients to the leaves. Determine if any leaves or roots need to be trimmed and examine the soil. You may want to replace much of the soil with a new soil medium before planting. Replace the soil by brushing or shaking it away until you can find healthy roots. Once you find healthy roots trim away the brown or dry dead roots with sanitized tools and replace the soil.



What is the condition of the soil?

Occasionally your plant may have used all the nutrients in the soil it was started in or is in a soil that doesn't meet the plant's nutritional needs. We suggest keeping [Soil Master's Soil test kit](#) on hand is a must. The Soil Master Soil test is wonderful for everything from lawn and garden beds to houseplants and other plants that need a little extra attention. Use the soil test to determine your plant's pH levels as well as its Nitrogen, Phosphates, and Potassium levels. Use the rule, "Don't guess, test" when it comes to determining your next course of action.



Pamper your neglected plant

Addressing the three most common issues neglected plants face above gives your plant a good start to improving the conditions needed to thrive. Ensure once your perennial is planted that, they have a head start at retaining the water and the nutrients to flourish. We recommend using [Mosser Lee's Long-Fibered Sphagnum Moss](#) saturated with an appropriate fertilizer to line the hole or pot you plan on planting in. This helps to promote a healthier root system and ensures that your plants have access to the nutrients they need.



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