

- 1 If a plant's aboveground 'parts' are accidentally severed, they can sometimes salvage it by locating and digging up the roots or rhizomes.
- 2 Nearly all plants will need to be watered appropriately for the first year in their new locations; after that, they should be hardy except during periods of drought.
- 3 For replanting, here is a recommendation: start with good soil that has been brought out of the rescue site. Add a mixture of a soil amendment such as Nature's Helper or Pro-Care Soil Conditioner, and coarse, or river, sand (not play sand). Mix in, except in the late fall, winter, or very early spring, a small amount of compost or an organic fertilizer or manure such as Black Cow. Since so many plants need good drainage, supply small rocks from the digging site to the mix. Top off the work with duff, the forest-floor mix of decomposed leaves and topsoil.
- 4 Certain indigenous plants such as native orchids, cannot survive more than a few years without specific mycorrhizal fungi found in their roots and in the soil. They must be moved into woody areas that come close to the original habitat. Plenty of topsoil and duff from the surrounding soil of the rescue site should be included in the bag.
- 5 Lady's-slippers, native orchids which are notoriously difficult to move, are by far best transplanted either when dormant, or well into summer. The delicate spring leaves are crucial to the life of the plant and mustn't be damaged. Lady's-slippers establish themselves at very little soil depth; they should be handled by using a garden fork or pitchfork, lifting the plant and all its roots gently. A shovel isn't a good idea - vital lateral roots could be cut off. The plants should quickly be re-set onto the raked surface of a mixed hardwoods-and-pines area, then the root systems well covered with the original duff. Additional duff may need to be added for several years.
- 6 When a plant is removed from its natural home, but especially during warm weather, it may very well suffer from shock. So appropriate watering is essential, and in the case of some plants such as azaleas, crucial. (Newly replanted azaleas should be watered as often as every day; this is crucial during dry spells.) After a year, nearly all plants should be able to stand on their own, except during drought, of course.
- 7 Azaleas need to be dug with a wide diameter, but there is no need to go deep - their root systems are relatively shallow. (Eight to ten inches should be deep enough.) There is a difference of opinion about cutting back severely, but it may save the life of the plant if it is rescued in the summer. Selective pruning, rather than major amputation, will better retain the form of a nicely shaped azalea.
- 8 For fuller, healthier ferns, cut back all the old or spent fronds, including those on evergreen ferns, in very early spring before new shoots appear.
- 9 For various reasons, including drainage, cool root run, and protection from rodents, we find that many plants are happiest in and among rocks. The bulbs of trout lilies, for instance, are usually found surrounded by small rocks, and both the plant and the rocks go deep. (Digging trout lilies requires a commitment of patience and time, but the foliage and flowers, though short-seasoned, are worth the effort.)
- 10 Spring ephemerals, such as trout lilies, are those plants that bloom, set seed, and go dormant before the heat of summer. Ephemerals are among the loveliest of our native plants, and they all flower within a relatively short timeframe. This gives us the opportunity to create glorious woodland areas, but precautions need to be taken to prevent what looks like an empty space, in September, for instance, from being dug up for another plant.

- 11 The winter foliage or rosettes of certain plants (i.e., cardinal flower, green-and-gold) should be kept free of leaf cover; they don't appreciate being smothered.
- 12 Plants that seem to enjoy similar conditions, such as wet soil, may actually have differing needs. A plant that is found growing alongside a creek may not do well in a boggy area – it requires more oxygen. And all ferns don't automatically want moist glens; some such as ebony spleenwort choose a rather dry, lean soil.
- 13 A few plants such as ebony spleenwort, spotted wintergreen, and running ground pine grow best in very acidic soil. And another small category of plants, northern maidenhair fern for example, are happiest in more basic soil.
- 14 Certain wildflowers have distinct, prominent rhizomes that should be considered when digging: wild geranium, bloodroot, Solomon's-seal, and Solomon's-plume, for instance. It's best not to sever them, but if this happens, both parts can be planted, hopefully creating two plants. And bellwort has interesting roots: white, fleshy, somewhat octopus-like.
- 15 If the stems or leaves of trilliums are broken before summer, the plants may not have gained enough strength to rejuvenate readily the following spring. The stems are easily damaged, so greater care should be taken with trilliums than with some other plants. On the other hand, once they are moved successfully to a new home, most trilliums easily adapt and aren't finicky. Southern nodding trillium (*T. rugelii*) does, however, need to be replanted in a moist area such as the top of a creek bank.
- 16 When attempting to dig milkweed, such as the interesting, architectural-looking white milkweed sometimes found in our woods, keep in mind that it will have a deep taproot and doesn't like to have this food-and-water source severed.
- 17 A few plants, such as crane-fly orchis and toothwort, exhibit an interesting characteristic: the foliage appears in early winter but disappears by mid-spring.

RESCUE TIPS

Look at the conditions a plant is growing in and then look to see if it is happy in those conditions. If it is spindly it might want more sun than what it has.

Plant's growing along a creek still have good drainage unlike bog condition.

Pre-mark in your landscape where you will plant common plants like Christmas fern and ginger. It helps you get your plants in the soil quicker.

When digging in the winter some leaves of perennials like foamflower are dormant. Dig a rootball as if it is a mature plant. Sometimes if you look close you can see the dead leaves still attached, this will give you a hint of the size of the plant. If in doubt go big.

In the summer cut leaves in half or off a plant or fern before planting. It will resprout when it is ready.

During the summer remember that the big trees that are established get first dibbs on ground water. Keep rescued plants watered or plant in a pot and keep watered til Oct.-Nov. and then plant. It will give the plant a few months for it's roots to get established before winter dormancy sets in.

When someone finds a great plant look uphill for the Mom and downhill for the babies. If it is a flat area then look in a circular pattern to see if there are more.

On plants that you aren't familiar with look to see how much of it there is. If there is a lot it might not be a desirable plant.

When digging a plant in an area where there are a lot of weeds or invasive plants. When you get it home

carefully shake off the top layer of dirt to get rid of weed seed.

Poison ivy is frequently dug by accident with rescue plants. In the spring when you see it leafing out take a plastic sleeve that covers newspapers. Put it over your arm and pull out the poison ivy. Then turn it inside out and throw away the poison ivy. It comes out easy because it has been transplanted and is not well rooted.