

Clematis

Clematis is a vining perennial that with proper care will provide your yard with a brilliant show of color. Many people believe clematis is difficult to grow—this isn't true. If you know a few simple facts about clematis, they are relatively easy to grow.



1. Clematis require a site that will receive at least ½ day of direct sunlight. This helps in bud and bloom production and in lowering the susceptibility of crown rot. Young clematis are extremely susceptible to crown rot (a fungal disease) which can usually be prevented by treating the plant with a garden or flower fungicide (dust or spray) throughout the growing season.
2. Clematis is also very sensitive to any root disturbances. These may include animals digging around the roots, growing in a low spot where water may collect, or any other type of soil disturbance.
3. Clematis also like to have a cool root zone. This can be achieved by putting a layer of mulch around the base of the plant or putting it near other plants which will shade the soil but not the growing part of the plant.

If all the above requirements are met, you should have little trouble getting clematis started. Give them time to get a good root system established before expecting flowers. This may take a year or two. (The double flowering varieties may take longer to establish themselves).

There are three basic types of clematis: ones that produce flowers on this year's growth (new wood); ones that produce flowers on the previous year's growth (old wood); and the last type which flowers on both "new" and "old" growth.

The first type produces buds on the new growth, off-and-on during each season, and should be heavily pruned every winter or early spring back to the first pair of leaf buds above the ground. "Heavy" or severe pruning means cutting nearly to the ground, leaving only one or two sets of buds on the vine. This is usually within 6-8" of the ground—best for new wood bloomers.

Light pruning involves more judgment. Usually it means reducing the plant to a more manageable size, pruning to revitalize the plant, or trimming to retrain the vine. Light pruning is preferred for vines that flower on old wood so only a minimum of flower buds are removed.

Florida Group

Flower in late spring on last year's wood – Do not prune until after they bloom

- 'Bell of Woking' – Pale, mauve, double flower
- 'Kathleen Dunford' – Semi-double, rosy purple flowers

Jackman Group

Flowers in July to August on new growth – Prune these back in early spring

- 'Comtesse de Bouchard' – Pink and lavender blooms June to August
- 'Jackmani' – Purple flowers – Blooms June through August
- 'Victoria' – 4 to 5 inches' diameter, light blue flowers – Flowers all season

Lanuginosa Group

Flowers in June on last year's wood – Do not prune until after they bloom

- 'Candida' – White, large flowers
- 'Nelly Moser' – Large, mauve, pink flowers – Great one
- 'Henryi' – 4 to 5 inch white flowers
- 'Crimson King' – Double red, large flowers

Patens Group

Bloom on old wood – Do not pruen until after they bloom

- 'Daniel Deronda' – Large, violet-blue flowers
- 'Miss Bateman' – White flowers with brown center
- 'The President' – 6 inch deep violet flowers

Viticella Group

Blooms on new and old wood – Do not prune until August, if you must

- 'Ernest Mackham' – Reddish-purple flowers, 3 to 4 inches in diameter
- 'Mrs. Spencer Castle' – Large, double flowers, lavender blooms May into June and again in the fall
- 'Hudine' – Bright white, 3 to 4 inch diameter flowers

Did You Know?

There are many pronunciations of the word clematis. Say it the way you like and if people look at you funny, it's only because they've heard it pronounced a different way. Do it your way!