

Clematis

A Garden Guide

CLEMATIS has been called the queen of vines, and they want fertile well-draining soil, cool roots, and consistent moisture. Clematis come in various colors, bloom times, flower forms, and lengths. They are gorgeous covering an arbor, trellis, fence, mailbox, or lamppost. They prefer full sun (6-8 hours) to part sun (4-6 hours) of sunlight.



PLANTING: They like ample soil preparation. Dig a hole at least 18" wide as well as deep, working mushroom compost or well-rotted manure into the bottom of the hole as well as in with the backfill soil. Add a handful or two of rock phosphate or bone meal to the backfill. **Clematis is one of the few plants that like to be planted deeply** – bury the root ball 2-3" below soil level.

KEEP ROOTS SHADED: Clematis likes to have their tops in open sun but their roots in the shade. Mulch is important to keep roots cool, place about 2" deep and keep at least 3" away from the stem of the plant.

FERTILE SOIL: Organic fertilizers that feed the life in the soil, that then nourishes the plant, is an excellent approach for long term plant health and resilience. Some options include: composted Cow manure, Fish emulsions, Kelp meal, Espoma Flower-Tone®, Worm castings, Green sand, and more. Apply according to product instructions.

MOISTURE: 1" of water per week. It is better to water deeply once a week than to water lightly, daily.

PRUNING: Prune right after blooming. Pruning encourages strong growth and flowering, and keeps growth in check. Prune to just above a bud. Unpruned plants will become long and scraggly, with blooms only at the tips of the vines.

CLEMATIS WILT: Clematis can be prone to a fungal disease called clematis wilt (*Ascochyta clematidina*). Physical damage to roots or stems creates routes to infection; the fungal spores are spread by splashing water, mulch too close to the stem, or unsanitary pruning. The plants will appear to turn brown, wither, and apparently die. Remove all infected plant parts, along with any mulch that diseased leaves have touched. Apply a copper fungicide drench to the soil around the plant. Plants usually recover and grow new vines next season.

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Clematis Varieties & Pruning

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Clematis alpina 'Pamela Jackmann': Zone 3-9

Bloom time: Late Spring

Masses of nodding 1 ½" deep blue blooms cover vine. Moderate grower 6-10'. Could prune lightly after blooming. Group 1.



Clematis alpina 'Stolwijk Gold': Zone 4-7

Bloom time: May – June

Violet blue bell shaped blooms attracting hummingbirds – golden foliage. Moderate grower, 6-8'. Group 1.

Clematis 'Henryi': Zone 4-8

Bloom time: May/June & again in July/September

Produces large single white blooms 6-8" in diameter. Medium grower 8-10 ft. Good for containers. The sweet fragrance from the blooms attract butterflies. Group 2.

Clematis 'H. F. Young': Zone 4-9.

Bloom time: late Spring/Early Summer. Rebloom

Fall. Huge 6-9" blossoms which are single soft blue/violet with cream anthers. Moderate grower, 8-10'. Group 2.

Clematis integrifolia 'Blue Ribbons': Zone 3-9.

Bloom time: Late spring-summer.

A superb new bush type clematis with nodding indigo blue flowers. After blooming ornamental silvery seed heads develop, lasting into early winter. Strong & upright, 12-16" tall and wide. Pruning. Group 3.

Clematis integrifolia 'Caerulea': Zone 3-7

Bloom time: June-September

Porcelain blue flowers appear on this non climbing woody based perennial. Has an upright or sprawling habit, 24" and can be used as a ground cover. This clematis produces new stems each year so old stems should be cut back to the ground each winter.

Clematis 'Ramona': Zone 4-8

Bloom time: May – September

Produces 6-8" single blooms that are pale lavender blue with red anthers. Medium grower, 10-16 ft. Group 3.

Clematis lanuginosa 'Candida': Zone 4-8 Bloom time: Late Spring/May Rebloom in Fall. Huge pure white blooms 5" in diameter. Moderate grower 6-9 ft. When a Clematis reblooms, prune immediately after blooming. Group 2.

Clematis montana var. rubens 'Freda': Zone 5-9

Bloom time: Late Spring/ Early Summer

Blooms open mauve/red color and soften to pink, produces many smallish blooms and also has a light sweet fragrance. Vigorous grower to 15-20 ft. but not as vigorous as *Clematis* 'Montana var. Rubens'. You can hand prune after flowering and cut back to the ground every few years if needed. Group 1.

Clematis montana var. rubens: Zone 5-9 Bloom time: Late Spring/Early Summer
Produces 2" pastel pink blooms with a vanilla scent. Vigorous grower to 30 ft. If you do wish to prune – do so after blooming. Group 1.

Clematis 'Sieboldii': Zone 6 Bloom time: June-August
Produces 3" blooms white petals surrounding a central dome of purple stamens. Moderate grower to 6-10 ft. Group 3.

Clematis texensis 'Princess Diana': Zone 4-8 Bloom time: Mid Summer/ Early Fall
Produces 2" long tulip shaped blooms that are a vivid pink/rose mauve with a cluster of creamy yellow stamens nestled in the throat. Moderate grower to 4-6 ft. Group 3.

*Clematis Vancouver*TM 'Danielle': Zone 4-9. Bloom time: May/June & again in Sept.
Produces 6-8" deep purplish blue blooms with striking red tipped stamens and a reddish bar on the petals. Vigorous grower with a compact habit. 5-7 ft. Great for containers. Group 2.

*Clematis Vancouver*TM 'Fragrant Star': Zones 4-9. Bloomtime: Late Spring, rebloom in fall. Single star shaped white blooms 6-8" across and maroon - purple stamens. Has wonderful vanilla fragrance. Moderate grower, 5-9'. Group 2.

*Clematis Vancouver*TM 'Mystic Gem': Zones 4-9. Blooms time: Late spring - Early summer. Rebloom fall. Masses of large flowers 6-8" across. Petals are great pink on white combination, with red stamens. Moderate grower, 6-8'. Group 2.

*Clematis Vancouver*TM 'Starry Nights': Zone 4-9 Bloom time: Mid Spring, Again in Fall
Produces 8" star shaped blooms that are purplish blue in colour with a red highlight on each petal. Vigorous grower with a compact habit. 6-10 ft. making it great for containers. Group 2.

Clematis viticella 'Betty Corning': Zone 4-9 Bloom time: June – September
Produces 2" bell shaped smokey violet blue blooms that are fragrant. Moderate grower to 5-6 ft. Plants should be cut back hard in early spring to a pair of buds 8-12" above ground. Group 3.

Clematis x 'Arabella': Zone 4-9 Bloom time: Summer & early fall.
Beautiful blue violet 3" blooms with creamy yellow anthers. This is one of the longest blooming clematis. Non-vining. Grows 3-6'. Group 3.

Clematis x 'Blue Light': Zone 4-9 Bloom time: June – September
Produces lots of 5-6" dahlia like blooms that are pale blue/violet. Fast growing vine. 6-8 ft. Great for containers. Group 2.

Clematis x 'Comtesse de Bouchaud': Zone 4-9 Bloom time: June –Sept.
Produces rose pink blooms 4-6" in diameter. Moderate grower to 8-12 ft. Cut back hard in early spring to a pair of buds 9-18" above the ground. Group 3.

Clematis x 'Ernest Markham': Zone 5-8 Bloom time: Sparse June-July, heavy Aug-Oct
Produces single magenta/red blooms with golden anthers 4-6" in diameter. Not fragrant. Moderate grower to 6-8 ft. Group 3.

Clematis x 'Jackmanii': Zone 4-8 Bloom time: Mid-late summer
Produces single bluish purple blooms 5-6" in diameter. Moderate grower to 7-10 ft. Group 3.

Clematis x 'Jackmanii Superba': Zone 4-8 Bloom time: May-October
This an improved version of Jackmanii, a more profuse bloomer with even slightly larger purple/blue blooms. Moderate grower to 10-12 ft. Group 3.

Clematis 'Mrs. Spenser Castle': Zone 5-10 Bloom time: Spring/Reblooms late summer
Produces large semi double purplish pink blooms 5-6" in diameter. Not fragrant. Moderate grower to 6-8 ft. Repeat bloomers should be pruned immediately after flowering. Group 2.

Clematis x 'Multi Blue': Zone 4-8 Bloom time: May-June/Rebloom Aug.- Oct.
Produces deep blue double flowers 4-5' in diameter. Flowers go through many stages making some blooms look double while others appear single. Moderate grower to 6-8 ft. Group 2.

Clematis x 'Nelly Moser': Zone 4-8 Bloom time: May-June
Produces single blooms that are pale pink with carmine midstripe that are 6-8" in diameter. No fragrance. Moderate grower to 6-10 ft. No pruning is required however a light pruning in early spring before new growth appears is advisable. Group 2.

Clematis x 'Niobe': Zone 4-9 Bloom time: May-September
Produces large single ruby red blooms with ivory stamens that are 5-7" in diameter. The blooms do hold their color well and have a slight fragrance. Moderate grower to 8-12 ft. Group 3.

Clematis x 'Pink Champagne': Zone 4-9 Bloom time: May-June/Reblooms July-September.
Produces blooms that are vivid purple/red or deep pink with a paler central bar diameter 6-8". Not fragrant. Moderate grower to 6-8 ft. Compact habit. Pruning. Group 2.

Clematis x 'Rouge Cardinal': Zone 4-8

Bloom time: June-September

Produces large crimson red blooms with brownish yellow stamens 4-6" in diameter. Blooms appear on current years growth. Moderate grower 8-12 ft. Prune back hard in early spring. Group 3.

Clematis x 'Toki': Zone 4-9

Bloom time: Late spring again late summer

Produces large single pure white blooms with yellow stamens 5-8" in diameter. Blooms are star shaped and do not have a fragrance. Moderate grower to 5-9 ft. Pruning. Group 2.



PRUNING

Clematis fall into three basic groups. Determining which group your clematis belongs to helps determine how and when to prune.

Group 1 vines flower in spring, on growth from the previous year.

Prune these vines right after they finish blooming

in spring. The new stems that grow will then have enough time to make flower buds for the following year.

How much to remove when pruning depends on the vine's vigor and how large a support you've provided for it. Vigorous sorts, such as varieties of *C. armandii*, can be cut back almost to the ground. On the other hand, very little pruning is necessary for *C. alpina* and *C. macropetala* and other slow-growing varieties.

Older portions of the stems of some of these spring bloomers, such as *C. montana*, are often reluctant to resprout after being cut back, so avoid cutting these plants back into very old wood, keeping in mind that the plant will get somewhat larger each year. The best thing to remember is that, no matter how you prune Group 1 plants, the new shoots that appear after pruning are the ones that will bear flowers the following season. To some degree, the less you shorten stems when pruning, the earlier the blossoms will appear.

Group 2 vines bloom in late spring or early summer, then again sporadically, on new shoots and old stems.

The vines that bloom mostly on older stems have their heaviest flush of flowers in late

spring, while those that bloom mostly on new shoots are more prolific in the latter part of summer.



Group 2 vines require a bit more pruning finesse than do the vines of the other groups. If you cut back these types drastically right after the first bloom, you miss out on much of the summer show; if you do so just before growth begins, you miss the spring flush.

A few approaches are effective when pruning this group. The most refined approach is to lightly thin out and disentangle stems before growth begins in late winter or early spring, and then go over the plant again after the earliest flowers fade in late spring or early summer, severely shortening the stems that bore those flowers. If the plant tends to bloom more heavily later rather than earlier in the season, you can be more heavy-handed when thinning stems before growth begins in early spring.

A simpler option when pruning Group 2 clematis vines is to severely prune the plant back by half in alternate years. Another approach is to cut the whole plant back drastically every few years just before growth begins, with little or no pruning in the intervening time; in this case, you give up only the earliest blossoms in the season you prune.



Group 3 vines flower in late summer or in fall, on new growth produced earlier in the season.

These are the easiest vines to prune. Just before the season's growth begins, or as it is beginning, lop all stems back to strong buds within a foot or so of the ground.

There is no need to cut a late-blooming clematis back so severely if you are going to let it ramble up into a tree where you want its blossoms held high. Furthermore, certain plants in this category, such as *C. orientalis* cultivars and *C. tangutica*, start blooming earlier and then continue longer if they are not cut back so hard.

If these instructions still seem confusing, the “do almost nothing” method can work with most clematis as long as you don’t mind an unmanageable vine. A drastic pruning every few years may sacrifice some blooms in the short term, but it will bring the plant to a more manageable size and, in getting rid of decrepit old stems, stimulate young replacement stems that will put more flowers at eye level.

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