

# CLEMATIS

**Where to Plant.** Clematis require at least 6 hours of direct sunlight to grow well. You may have heard the adage, “Clematis want their bodies in the sun and their feet in the shade” and been a bit confused...just try and give the roots some shade by planting annuals or applying a thin layer of mulch at the base of plants.

**How to Plant.** Clematis put down deep tap roots, so dig a deep hole and backfill to the top with compost. Also, because of these deep roots, Clematis do not like to be transplanted; make sure your planting site is permanent before you dig.

Apply Myke to the roots when planting and apply Fertilome Root Stimulator every two weeks. Feed twice a season with an organic slow-release fertilizer like Plant-tone, Milorganite, or Coop Poop.

Water thoroughly and deeply about every 7-10 days through the growing season.

Keep your mulch a few inches away from the crown of the plant. Piling too much mulch at the base can cause the main stem to rot and die.

Clematis will vine without much help; however, they need to be able to wrap their tendrils around something. So, for things like wood fences, lamps, or mailbox posts attach chicken wire to give vines a better climbing surface.

**Designers Tip.** Plant two or three different varieties together. This will give you the longest show of flowers!

**Pruning.** The subject of pruning Clematis can get overly complicated. Clematis will bloom regardless of when you prune. A general guideline is to selectively prune out old, dead wood early spring and wait to cut vines back harshly until after they bloom.

## HERE IS A MORE DETAILED, VARIETY-SPECIFIC PRUNING GUIDELINE.

**Blooms on old stems.** This group of clematis produce their flowers directly from old stems and, therefore, pruning must not be done until right after all flowering has been completed. Prune this group by removing all dead and weak stems immediately after flowering. Large established plants over 15 feet are normally not pruned, especially if they are growing in trees. All stems at this time should be tied into position on their trellis or other host. Also, if the Clematis has outgrown their space the correct and only time to prune to size is right after flowering is done. After pruning, the plant will begin to put on new growth for next season’s blooms.

**Flowers on last year’s stems.** In early spring watch for swelling leaf buds beginning to show. Cut all dead material off above these swelling buds. Be sure all growth is tied to trellis, etc. at this time. Do not tie too tightly, so growth is not hampered by ties. Tight fastenings can also crack stems.

**Blooms later, on new growth.** This group should be pruned in February or March as new leaf buds begin to show low on the plant. All dead material above these buds should be removed at this time. Clean out any old foliage or foliage with mildew at this time also.



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