

Clematis

The diversity of Clematis is stunning. Some are evergreen, others are deciduous, some have huge purple, white or pink blooms, and others have small creamy fragrant blooms. Most are vines, some are shrubby. There are some with yellow or even cerulean blue, bell-shaped flowers. Some kinds bloom in the spring, some in the summer. Others bloom in the spring and late summer or fall, and some only in the fall. Today, there are more than 200 varieties of clematis vines available for Northwest gardeners.

Clematis plants have three main requirements – sunlight on their stems and leaves; cool, moist soil at their roots; and support for climbing.

Sunlight-Sun loving varieties should be planted where they will receive at least six hours of daylight. Some filtered shade during the hottest part of the day will help keep dark-colored blooms from fading. Some clematis prefer part-shade, plant these where they will get morning sun and afternoon shade.

Cool root zone-use lots of mulch or organic compost, or plant low-growing shrubs or perennials that will shade the base of the vine.

Support-use a fence, trellis or even a tall shrub. Another vine, such as climbing rose or wisteria, can support clematis, with an intermingling of blossoms. Trellising is most often used because it helps restrict a clematis plant to a certain area.

Dig a large planting hole, two feet deep and nearly as wide. Improve the soil with fine bark, manure, compost and/or peat moss if the soil is very heavy or has lots of clay. Add lime if it is very acidic. If your garden tends toward clay, rough up the sides of the planting hole to prevent "glazing," this can keep the roots from growing beyond the smooth sides of the planting hole into the surrounding soil. This roughing up can also help water from pooling up in the planting hole during the wet season.

Set the plant in the hole with the crown two to three inches below the soil surface. Stake the vine until it has grown enough to reach its permanent support. A new plant should be well-watered, but not overfed. Once established, clematis like rose or tomato food, or any fertilizer in the range of 5-10-5 or 5-10-10.

Pinch out the tips of new shoots once or twice during the first growing season to encourage branching near the base of the vine.

Pruning: Most clematis will perform better with an annual pruning. There are many varieties and each has particular requirements, so check a pruning book before you start cutting.

Group A: **Spring bloomers** flower on last year's wood. After bloom, cut back shoots that flowered to about half their length. Thin out weak and tangled stems.

Group B: **Summer or fall blooming** clematis bloom at ends of new spring stems. Cut back to 1-2 ½' in late fall after bloom or in early spring as buds swell.

Group C: **Twice blooming** clematis bloom on last years growth in the spring and this years growth in the summer or fall. In late fall or early spring prune lightly to thin out excess shoots or untangle stems. After spring blooms prune more heavily so the new shoots will develop for the second bloom.

Excerpted from Oregon State University extension and Sunset Western Garden Book. For More Information: <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/gardening/node/1462/print>

Clearview Clematis (grower) http://www.homeofclematis.net/html/pr_01.htm

British Clematis Society: <http://www.britishclematis.org.uk/planting.htm>

