

Growing & Maintenance Tips

Clematis can be grown in full sun or light shade, but the roots should be kept shaded to keep the root system cool and moist. This can be done by planting annuals, perennials or a small shrub in front of the rootball. A thick layer of mulch will also help to keep the soil moist, just make sure to keep the mulch an inch or so away from the base of the plant. This vine prefers to be grown in moist, well-drained, slightly alkaline soil. Adding lime to the soil will help to provide these conditions.

When planting clematis, it is important to plant it about 3" deeper than it was in the original pot. Bury the first set of entire leaves to encourage the production of strong shoots from below soil level and to discourage clematis wilt.



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PRUNING CLEMATIS



One question often asked by customers in the spring is, “How far back should I prune my Clematis?” The answer is dependent on knowing which pruning group your clematis variety belongs to. Clematis are divided into 3 pruning groups, each with different requirements. We list the pruning group for each variety we sell on our vine price list, the vine section being listed at the end of the perennial list. If you don’t know the variety name of your clematis, you might be able to determine which group it belongs to by knowing what time of year it flowers. If you make the once-a-year effort to properly prune your Clematis, you can keep your Clematis lush and full of blooms year after year!

First-year pruning:

Regardless of which group your Clematis is in, you should cut it 6 inches from the ground in late winter/early spring the first year after it is planted.

This will create a bushier, stronger plant that will flower from the base instead of 4 feet off the ground. If your Clematis is in group 1 or 2, the bad news is that this first-year pruning will prevent it from blooming this year. However, the beautiful plant that you will be rewarded with is worth this sacrifice.

Group 1: This group is made up of the ramblers and early bloomers. These Clematis bloom mostly on old wood (the previous season’s growth) and begin to flower in mid to late spring. Generally, they don’t require any pruning. If you need to prune, wait until right after flowering to do so. Reasons for pruning would be to remove any dead or diseased growth, or to keep your Clematis at a desired height.

Group 2: These are the early, large flowered varieties that bloom in the spring and again in the fall. The first flush of flowers is the heaviest and blooms on old wood, while the second flush appears on new growth.

You don’t want to prune this group too radically, since the first flush of flowers will bloom on the old stems. In early spring, starting at the top, cut back each stem about 6 to 8 inches, to right above a pair of new swollen leaf buds. Also remove any dead or weak stems at this time.

Group 3: This group contains the late flowering varieties and they bloom from new growth. In February or March, look for new leaf buds beginning to show low on the plant and cut back all old stems above these buds, usually about 12-30 inches from the ground.

Once you know which group your Clematis belongs to and you have that first-year trim out of the way, keeping your beautiful climber looking great and blooming like crazy simply requires a few minutes once a year.