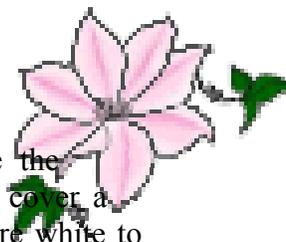


# Unique Garden Centre

## CLEMATIS



Few plants can rival the brilliant splendor of a clematis in bloom. Masses of brightly colored blossoms almost obscure the trellis. Treated properly they will grow vigorously and quickly to cover a trellis in a single season. Clematis are available in many colors from pure white to reds, pinks, magenta, yellow, purple and blue. Some produce huge blossoms, often 4-5" across, such as ruby red Ernest Markham, white Henry I and deep purple of Jackmanii are just a few examples. Clematis varieties range in hardiness, but many are hardy to zone 3, which are the varieties discussed here.

Many people are under the impression that clematis are hard to grow here on the prairies. Actually clematis are quite easy to grow as long as a few issues are addressed.

1. Purchasing a clematis. It is best to buy a two year old plant which will establish much quicker and produce flowers sooner. There are several species clematis which are very hardy for the prairies and are the best choice if you wish to use clematis away from a home foundation. Look for *Clematis alpine*, *C. macropetala*, *C. tangutica*, *C. viticella* or *C. integrifolia*.

Clematis varieties can be distinguished from one another according to how and when they flower. Understanding this is important in order to determine what pruning group they belong to.

2. Location. The site you select should have good sunny conditions and well drained soil. Because of our hot summers, care must be taken to protect the soil from the heat. Shade the base of the plant with rocks or under plantings such as Sedum 'Autumn Joy'.
3. Soil. Clematis like a slightly alkaline soil. Most of our prairie soils are neutral to alkaline, but check first with a simple soil pH testing kit. If needed to raise the soil pH, work in lime and don't use peat moss in the planting site as it is an acidic medium, compost is a better choice.
4. Proper pruning. Pruning for clematis is not the same for all the varieties. It is important to prune correctly or the flowering will be limited. More information on pruning below.



### Identifying the Pruning Group

If you know what variety or cultivar your clematis is then you can prune according to whether it is Group A, B, or C, (see below). If you do not know which group your clematis is in then try the following. If it flowers before July, it blooms on one year old wood that was produced the previous season, treat as group A or B. Mid summer flowering types generally bloom on vines produced this season and belong to group C.

### **Pruning Group A**

Flowers only on growth produced the previous year. Pruning should consist of cutting out weak or dead stems as soon as they are finished blooming in May or June. Pruning later than June or pruning severely will result in fewer blooms the following spring. Examples of Group One clematis that flower early on old wood: *Clematis alpina*, *C. macropetala*. *Clematis alpina* is very hardy with several varieties of *macropetala* (Bluebird, Rosy O'Grady) performing well.

### **Pruning Group B**

This group contains most of the large flowered hybrids. Some bloom twice in the year, spring and fall, others bloom most of the summer. Stems should be tied back into their supports when pruned.

**Group B (1)** are the varieties that flower on wood that has been hardened by the previous season's growth. Normal blooming patterns for this group consist of a heavy flush of flowers in May-June on the previous season's growth followed by a second smaller flush of blooms in September on the current season's growth. They bloom on 'old wood' (actually on short shoots from old wood). Pruning should be light, primarily to remove any dead or weak stems. Remaining stems should be shortened back to just above the top pair of fat green buds from which flowering shoots will develop. It is best to wait until late spring to see if the vines are indeed dead before pruning since new sprouts can emerge from some very dead looking vines.

A suggestion - The second bloom is increased if the seed heads are removed right after the first blooms drop their sepals.

Examples: Nelly Moser, Moonlight, Bees Jubilee, Blue Ravine, Capitaine Thuilleaux.

**Group B (2)** These varieties bloom simultaneously on last year's growth and the current season's growth. Group B (2) varieties normally bloom from June to September continuously. For pruning purposes these varieties can be treated either as group B (1) or C. If planted alone a group C pruning regime every second year is recommended.

In Canada you should get two flushes of flowers if you just clean out the old wood and prune to a bud 3'-4' above the ground. Prune as soon as possible after flowering. If winter kill was a problem, you may only get one late season flush of flowers.

Examples: The President, Silver moon, Crimson Star, Henryi, JohnPaul II, Lincoln Star.

### **Pruning Group C**

This group only bloom on the current year's growth. Blooming begins in early summer and continues through to fall. Prune hard in spring. Cut back plants in May to two strong sets of buds (4) on each stem as close to ground level as possible. This will provide a plant with blooms that start near ground level and continue to the top of the plant.

Examples: All *Clematis viticellas*, *C. integrifolia*, late flowering large-flowered varieties such as Jackmanii, Hagley Hybrid, Ernest Markham, Comtesse de Bouchaud, Perle d'Azure, Polish Spirit and Purpurea Plena Elegans.



### **Site And Soil Requirements**

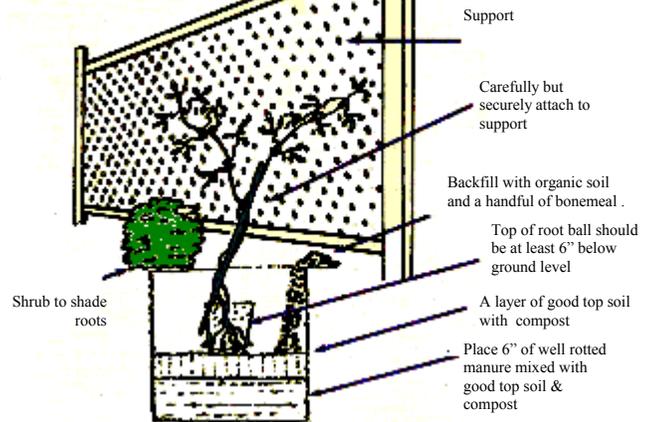
For all their beauty, clematis do demand some special treatments. They will thrive in full sun, but only if mulch or low growing ground cover is provided at their base to keep their roots cool. They will do well in partial shade, but must have a least half days sunlight, preferably with an eastern or western exposure.



## Planting

When setting out a new clematis, be sure that the soil has first passed the alkaline test as noted previously. Dig the hole deep enough (about a 2 ft. by 2 ft.) so that the plant can be set 2-6" deeper than it is growing in the pot (4" for hybrid varieties). Incorporate compost or a vermiculite/perlite mix into the soil, but do not add peat moss, as this is an acidic medium. Stake the new plant or provide it with a trellis from the start since the young stems are brittle and fragile. When all is in place, prune each stem back to a low pair of buds, or, if the plant is already exhibiting flower buds and you can't stand to remove them, let it have its first show of flowers and THEN cut it far back. This is an important step; it fosters growth and branching.

### PLANTING ON A FENCE OR TRELLIS



Clematis can be trained onto arbors, along fences and deck railings, up walls and anywhere that you want a dazzling show of color.

Always keep the plants well watered because they can not tolerate thirst. Work in compost, manure or bone meal in the spring to boost blooming. Do this carefully with out disturbing the roots and mound the enriched soil up around the base of the plant. Clematis climb by coiling leaf stems and need little if any encouragement to amble upwards.



## Diseases and Pests

Clematis are fairly free from disease and major pests, but there are a couple worth noting.

Clematis wilt is a fungal disease where part of the plant will suddenly turn black with purple veins and have a wilted look. It usually appears just as the flower buds begin to open with one or more stems being affected. Cut the whole affected stem to the ground and treat with a fungicide such as benomyl. Very seldom is the problem life threatening and the clematis will quickly re-grow. Note: If the leaves are brown and not black, the problem is more likely a broken or damaged stem. This could be caused by wind, hoeing, slugs or careless handling.

Mildew can also be a problem. It seldom occurs until late in the season and is not a problem at all if there is good air circulation. If mildew is noticed in its early stages, it can be easily controlled by many different fungicides readily available. Talk to our sales staff for an appropriate recommendation.

Pests are usually only three, slugs, earwigs and grasshoppers. Slugs prefer to attack young shoots, so use slug bait early in the season. Earwigs usually attack in mid summer and can turn the bloom of a late flowering clematis into lacework over night. Check with our sales staff for the correct pesticide to use. Grasshoppers are too mobile for there to be any effective control.



Clematis Group A	Clematis Group B (1)	Clematis Group B (2)	Clematis Group C
<i>C. alpina</i> ,	Alice Fisk	Belle Nantaise	Allanah
'Apple Blossom'	Asao	C.W. Dowman	Ascotiensis
'Constance'	Barbara Dibley	Crimson King	'Comtesse de Bouchaud'
'Pamela Jackman'	'Barbara Jackman'	Crimson Star	'Ernest Markham'
'Francis Rivas'	Beauty of Worcester	Edith	Etoile Violette
'Ruby'	'Bees Jubilee'	Fair Rosamund	'Gravetye Beauty'
'Willy'	'Belle of Woking'	Fuji Musume	Gypsy Queen
<i>C. macropetala</i>	Blue Ravine	'General Sikorski'	'Huldine'
'Blue Bird'	Capitaine Thuilleaux	Guiding Star	'Hagley Hybrid'
'Rosy O'Grady'	Carnaby	Halina Noll	<i>C. integrifolia</i> 'Blueboy'
'Jan Lindmark'	Charissima	'Henryi'	<i>C. integrifolia</i> 'Durandii'
'Markham's Pink'	Countess of Lovelace	Horn of Plenty	'Jackmanii'
'White Swan'	Daniel Deronda	Jackmanii Alba	Jackmanii Superba
'Maidwell Hall'	'Dr. Ruppel'	Jackmanii Rubra	John Huxtable
	'Duchess of Edinburgh'	Joan Picton	Kardynal Wyszynski
	Elsa Spath	John Paul II	Lady Betty Balfour
		John Warren	Mme. Eduard Andre
	Gillian Blades	Kathleen Wheeler	Mme. Julia Correvon
	Gladys Picard	Lady Gray	Margaret Hunt
	Guernsey Cream	'Lincoln Star'	Margot Koster
	H.F. Young	Lord Nevill	Niobe
	Haku Ookan	Mme. Le Coultre	<i>C. orientalis</i>
	Kathleen Dunford	Prince Phillip	'Perle d'Azur'
	Lady Caroline Nevill	Ramona	Pink Fantasy
	Lady Lonsborough		Prince Charles
	Lasurstern	Sealand Gem	Rouge Cardinal
	Margaret Wood	Serenata	Sealand Gem
	Miss Bateman	Sho Un	Serenata
	Moonlight	Silvermoon	Star of India
	Mrs. Cholmondely	Sylvia Denny	<i>C. tangutica</i> Golden Harvest
	Mrs. George Jackman	'The President'	Victoria
	Mrs. N. Thompson	Twilight	Ville de Lyon
	Mrs. P.T. James	Ville de Lyon	<i>C. viticella</i> 'Blue Angel'
	Mrs. Spencer Castle	Violet Charm	<i>C. viticella</i> 'Blue Bell'
	Multi Blue	'Warsaw Nike'	<i>C. viticella</i> 'Minuet'
	'Nelly Moser'	W.E. Gladstone	<i>C. viticella</i> 'Polish Spirit'
	'Pink Champagne'	William Kennet	<i>C. viticella</i> 'Purpurea Plena Elegans'
	Piccadilly		<i>C. viticella</i> 'Rubra'
	Proteus		<i>C. viticella</i> 'Royal Velours'
	Royalty		
	Sally Cadge		
	Sir Garnet Wolseley		
	Snow Queen		
	Violet Elizabeth		
	'Vyvyan Pennel'		
	Walter Pennell		
	Will Barron		
	Will Goodwin		