

Clematis

Source: A Plant Lover's Guide to Clematis

By Linda Beutler

Basic Information: There are approx. 300 species, located on all the major continents except Antarctica. Most are very hardy. A brief tally of the varieties shown in the back of this book show number of species by zone as below:

Zone 2+	2	Zone 3+	35
Zone 4+	67	Zone 5+	71
Zone 6+	6	Zone 7+	17

Clematis (surprisingly) can be a small evergreen shrub (New Zealand variety), or an herbaceous perennial (Siberia), a deciduous woodland shrub (Korea), or of course, the vines we are familiar with in North America and Europe. This diversity also includes extremes that include: Some have no leaves. Other vines can grow so hefty, they can fell mature trees. Some prefer wet feet. They all attract pollinators. The Texas natives are even pollinated by hummingbirds.

Planting Instructions:

Depth: If you are planting a *large flowering hybrid*, bury the plant 2 – 3 inches deeper than the top of the soil in the pot. Provided the plant has 2 growth nodes that will be covered with soil. For all other Clematis, plant them in the ground at the soil level in the pot. Got it?

When: You can plant any time of the year unless the ground is frozen, soggy, or bone dry.

How: To plant a gallon size plant:

1. Dig a hole about 18 inches deep.
2. While digging, soak the plant in the pot or not, in a deep tub of water to the top, and allow it to soak until it stops bubbling. The plant needs to be well hydrated.
3. In the hole, place some organic compost or composted manure, with a handful of bone meal or rose & flower food.
4. If the varieties are Atragene, Texensis or Evergreen, also add some gravel or grit to the hole. 1 cup chicken grit or ¼ - 10 washed gravel.
5. Mix 3 and 4 with some native soil and add water to the hole to the half-way mark.
6. When the planting hole has drained, remove the plant from the water tub and place it in the hole, adding more soil mix with compost slowly firming it

up around the plant as you fill it in. Take care to not push down on the roots to break them.

7. For tall or vining plants, you can place the stake that came in the pot, near the crown but not in the crown, slowly working it down. The stake can support the plant while it grows up onto the shrub, tree, or trellis you planted it near.

Where: Plant needs vary by species. Check the tag or reliable source for sun and shade needs.

Pruning: All Clematis need to be pruned some times.

1. The Montana, Atragene and Evergreen (Armandii) varieties should be pruned by about half their length after their spring blooms fade. These are typically large varieties that will become unmanageable if not pruned when needed. Some annually, others less often. When needed is the key.
2. The large flowering hybrid group can be pruned down to 6 – 12 inches annually in late winter. (In our climate, they probably die back that far anyway!)
3. In areas where hard die-back is uncommon, but you still have regular freezing, you don't have to prune back to 12 inches. Instead, check your plants in early spring (March) and look at the vines and buds. Prune back to the plump buds and live wood.

Propagation:

1. **Seeds.** You can grow from seed, but know that the hybrids will not come true from seed. Just pick off the swirling seed heads and remove the tails to plant the seeds.
2. **Cuttings.** Prune the new spring growth when about 2-3 inches in spring and using growth hormone place them in a planting media of perlite/vermiculite until roots form and transplant into a light potting mix until roots are established well enough to transplant into the ground. This may take a year.
3. **Division.** When you have multiple shoots coming from the ground, you can dig it and rinse off the roots so you can see them to separate the roots for each crown. Take care not to allow the roots to dry. Replace the parent plant into the moist ground quickly. Pot up the new divisions using transplant tonic, allowing them to grow a more vigorous root system needed before planting in the ground.