

# Caring for Clematis

One of the most beautiful vines in the garden is the perennial clematis - and for good reason. It has few diseases, is largely pest-free, and has lovely flowers. What more could a gardener want!

There are over 250 species of clematis, in colors of white, pink, blue, purple, red, mauve, lavender, and blends of all these colors. Most clematis bloom for several weeks in May and June; others bloom in summer; and a few bloom in late summer to fall. They are wonderful when grown on fences, trellises, a porch railing, or over a pergola or archway. All they need is something to wrap their stems around.

**PLANTING:** The ideal spot for clematis is in moist, well-drained soil that gets sun for at least half the day. The soil should be improved with 1/3 organic matter, such as Bumper Crop or compost. The crown should be planted an inch below the soil surface to encourage multiple shoots. Water deeply after planting and place 2 inches of mulch over the root area (not near the stem). Don't be alarmed if there is little growth in the first season - clematis take a while to establish.

**CARE:** In dry spells, water deeply once a week. Clematis are heavy feeders. In spring, once the clematis buds are about 2 inches long, start feeding them with a fertilizer formulated specifically for blooming plants. Alternate feeding every 4 to 6 weeks with an all purpose fertilizer. Continue this alternate feeding until the end of September. You can also use a slow-release fertilizer once per season. If you are an organic gardener, feed every second week with fish emulsion. Renew mulch to a 2 inch depth before winter.

**PRUNING:** Clematis are divided into 3 main groups based on blooming season:

1. Blooms in early spring - should be pruned immediately after flowering if they need shaping or trimming.
2. Blooms in midsummer - should be cut back to 2 ft. in April and May if they did not die back to the ground during winter.
3. Blooms in late summer and fall - should be pruned in early spring, above the lowest pair of strong buds on each stem (to about 2 to 3 ft.)

Johnson's carries a wide selection of clematis. A few of the top choices include:

**Comtesse de Bouchard** - Rosy-lilac - June to Sept.

**Ernest Markham** - Bright magenta - August to fall

**Harlow Carr** - Indigo blue - June to October

**Henryi** - Pure white - June to September

**Jackmanii** - Deep purple - June to September

**Nelly Moser** - Maube with pink - June to September

**Rosemoor** - Wine-red - June to September

**Sweet Autumn** - White - September to October

WASHINGTON, DC  
4200 Wisconsin Ave, NW  
at Van Ness St

[www.johnsonsfloorists.com](http://www.johnsonsfloorists.com)  
KENSINGTON, MD  
10313 Kensington Pkwy  
next to the Post Office

OLNEY, MD  
5011 Olney-Laytonsville Rd  
Rt 108 and Zion Rd

