



Clematis

Clematis like to be planted in fertile, cool, moist soil in full sun, spaced 24-36" apart. Keep the soil light and evenly moist - clematis prefer an even moisture level - not too wet or too dry. It needs to have its roots shaded. Do this by planting annuals or shallow-rooted perennials nearby. Clematis is shallow-rooted, take care when cultivating nearby. Provide support (trellis, fence, post, arbor, or allow to clamber through shrubs and trees like climbing Roses or Apple trees) for the vines to climb. Never use bark or leaf mulch in summer which can promote Clematis wilt. Vine grows 8-12' or more. Flowers in summer or fall, depending on variety.

C. alpina - One of the hardiest and easiest types to grow, the flowers have a delicate charm that is hard to beat and leads one to believe these are delicate plants, but they are truly tough beyond belief. These varieties are suited to north facing, shady or cool spots and are the first to start the flower display. Single flowers are formed on long stalks directly from the leaf axils on previous year's growth. On average, flower winter. Often they will re-bloom in fall, this can vary from year to year, and you might be surprised by how

much it will bloom at this time of year. This type belongs to prune category A and should only be pruned for shape, training and to remove dead growth after leafing out in early spring.

C. integrifolia - This is a herbaceous perennial that forms a gradually expanding clump with each stem producing a solitary nodding flower. These types do not climb nor do they wrap their stems around supports, instead they grow as groundcovers or can be forced upward with ties to a low growing shrub. Flower form is bell shaped and of a thick and fleshy texture, on average 1 inch wide and long. Colors are commonly in the range of blues with creamy white stamens and 3 to 6 inch long leaves. Prune category is C, meaning cut them back to the ground in late fall or early spring before growth begins. Named varieties such as Blue Boy have more rewarding qualities than the species itself.

C. macropetala - If you asked me which was my favorite clematis type, my answer would be from this group. These types will come through the most severe winters unscathed, and never fails to put on a flower show for all to enjoy. This type is sometimes classed as a separate group, the atragenes. They are all known by their double, nodding open flowers about 2-3 inches across. Foliage is vigorous, neat and attractive with serrated edges. This species prefer a cooler, shadier site but will do equally well in full, direct sun. Flowering times are early spring, with vines reaching an average 8-10 feet tall. Prune category A, cut back only to shape, train and to remove dead growth after leafing out in early spring. These are always the lushest and fastest growing on our benches!

C. tangutica - Originating in China, this is the most commonly grown species and the most recognizable. Coloring is mostly in shades of yellow, flowers are 1 to 1.5 inches long and wide, forming nodding bells. Seed heads are spectacular, with a shining intense silver sheen and lasts well into winter. Leaf color is noted for its sea green color and should not be mistaken for a sickly foliage color. This species will tolerate more shade than any other. Bloom period is from July to October, vines reach up to 15 feet and belong to prune category C.

C. viticella - These varieties are so prolific in bloom that having smaller flowers is certainly no disadvantage, especially since they bloom for a full 3 months on average! It is only the lack of color range that makes them less appreciated. They are virtually free from wilt, the fungal problem which most affects the gardeners' success with clematis in general. Some flower forms are quite ugly and twisted, most are open bell shapes. They are often a rich purple, red or burgundy shade. Leaf shape can vary, some being long and narrow, others quite rounded, but usually about 5 inches long. Because the colors are so dark, careful consideration must be given to placement as the dark colors don't always provide the show expected. Bloom period is from July to September, vines reaching up to 12 feet tall, belonging to prune category C, and should be cut to the ground each winter.

