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how to plant and grow clematis

Posted in All Gardening Advice, Shrubs and Climbers, May, June, July, August, September, Climbers on 1st September 2019

Transform a pergola or wall with wonderful clematis, or be more adventurous and plant one of them through a tree.

PLANTING

In the garden

Clematis need moisture-retentive, but well-drained soil, in full sun or partial shade. Keep the base of the plant and the roots cool and shaded by carefully positioning other plants, or put a layer of pebbles or flat stones at the base.

Dig a hole, at least twice as wide as the pot in which the plant is growing and half as deep again.

Add some well rotted organic compost (leaf-mould, decayed manure, etc) to the bottom of the hole, add a handful of fertiliser. Soak the plant well before carefully removing the plant with its cane support from the container. Gently tease out some of the roots and place in the hole. Large flowered cultivars should be planted with two leaf nodes below soil level. This will mean that the top of the container plant will be at least 3 inches below the soil level. Planting this deep will encourage the plant to become multi-stemmed. Species clematis, which have thin fibrous root systems, do not need to be planted deeply. Back-fill with a mixture of soil and compost. Water the plant well.

When planting next to shrubs or trees place the hole outside the rain shadow and use the canes to train the plant into the shrub/tree.

When planting next to a wall or fence, dig the hole at least 2 feet from the wall and train the plant along the cane towards the wall. Water regularly until well established.

In Containers

To grow clematis in pots it's best to use a large container – at least 45cm in diameter with the same depth, for good root growth. Make sure a suitable support is in place such as an obelisk or a small trellis. Use a loam-based compost to fill your container, such as John Innes No. 2 or 3. Water regularly and feed throughout the growing season to maintain healthy growth and lots of flowers!

AFTERCARE AND MAINTENANCE

Newly planted clematis will need regular watering whilst they establish. All clematis will need watering during hot dry periods. A thorough, deep soaking once a week is better than watering little and often.

Feed your Clematis each year in late winter or early spring. Spread a slow-release, potassium-rich fertiliser around the base of the plant and apply a mulch afterwards of organic matter such as well-rotted manure or compost.

In early spring, put some slug/snail prevention in place to prevent damage to young shoots.



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For detailed instructions on [how to prune clematis](#) see Sarah's guide.

Cut flowers

Cut early in the morning or evening. Select only the blooms in good condition growing on strong and healthy stems. Use flowers which are not fully open, as they will unfurl their sepals (tepals) gradually after cutting and placing them in water.

You may also like:

- [Clematis for every month of the year](#)
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