



7454 Victor-Pittsford Rd. (Rt.96)  
Victor, NY 14564  
(585) 924-2274  
customerservice@  
bristolsgardencenter.com

## Growing and Pruning Clematis

Clematis can be a long lived flowering vine. With proper pruning and minimal care your flowering vine will reward you with glorious blooms for years to come! Clematis vines are divided into 3 different pruning groups: Group 1, Group 2, and Group 3. Many people may get discouraged by pruning their Clematis but take care in knowing that even an **incorrect pruning is rarely terminal**. It is important however, that you keep record of the name and type of your Clematis so that you can figure out what pruning type yours falls under, if you should forget.

### Pruning Group 1:

- Those which flower only on old wood (or previous seasons growth). **Bloom in the spring time.**
- *Only prune what is needed.* Remove deadwood and weak stems as growth begins mid to late spring.
- If they have outgrown their space, prune and tidy up the plant after flowering. Untangle and re-tie in early summer.
- Pruning this group **too heavy or too early** may cost you your flowers for a season!

### Pruning Group 2:

- These are types that produce **2 flushes of flowers**. The first in the **spring** on old wood and the second during late **summer/fall** on current seasons growth.
- *If selective pruning is needed do so after first round of flowering* (working from the top down) removing dead and weakened stems.
- You can cut back flowering shoots *slightly* to encourage a better rebloom.
- Untangle and re-tie as needed, after first bloom.

### Pruning Group 3:

- This group includes all clematis that flower on current seasons growth. **Mid to late summer bloom.**
- Do *annual pruning in mid to late spring* when you see your Clematis starting to bud and leaf out.
- Cut back to lowest pair of live buds (roughly 8-12" or more if you want a taller vine)
- This may seem drastic and counter-productive however, by pruning back hard you are encouraging the emergence of vigorous new shoots which will in turn, be loaded with flowers later on.
- As these new shoots emerge take the time to spread them out and train them to your trellis.

## *Caring for your Clematis*

### **Tips for your new Clematis:**

Some experts suggest cutting back all newly planted Clematis (regardless of pruning type) to roughly 18-24" the first 1-2 years. The reasoning behind this is to *keep the top portion of the plants in proportion to the roots* which are still slowly developing. In doing this, flowering is not completely sacrificed but delayed. Cutting your clematis back the first 2 seasons will also give you a more balanced vine with multiple shoots coming up from the base instead of just one.

### **If your Clematis is over-grown:**

If your Clematis is over-grown and you don't know what type it is???

Your best option is to cut it back hard to around 18-24" above ground, leaving 3-5 healthy, main stems at the base. Start to guide and train the new shoots as they grow. You can do this after your vine has flowered for the year (early summer) or you can cut it back mid to late spring and sacrifice your flowers for that year.

**Avoid pruning Clematis in the fall.**

### **End of the season care:**

- Plants should be mulched to provide extra winter protection for roots. Take care not to cover the crown of the plant with mulch and debris.
- Make sure Pruning Group 1 and 2 Clematis (spring blooming) are securely tied up to withstand wind and snow through the winter.
- If the season is dry, be sure to water your clematis well.

### **Fertilizing:**

It is best to apply a balanced fertilizer mid to late spring as your vines are emerging and then again mid-summer as group 2 and 3 Clematis are starting to bloom. (E.g. Jack's Blossom Booster; Bonide Root & Grow)