

Clematis Care Guide for BC

HOW TO PLANT, GROW & PRUNE CLEMATIS VINES

Clematis are spectacular climbing vines known for their large, colourful flowers and long bloom season. With hundreds of varieties available, clematis can bloom from early spring through late summer depending on the type.

Most clematis are deciduous vines, but some evergreen varieties grow well in mild coastal climates.

With the right planting location and pruning, clematis are long-lived and rewarding garden plants.

UNDERSTANDING CLEMATIS TYPES

Clematis are grouped by flowering time and pruning needs.

Group 1 – Early Blooming Clematis

- Flower in early spring
- Bloom on old wood (last year's growth)
- Includes evergreen clematis

Examples:

- Clematis armandii (Evergreen Clematis)
- Clematis montana

Group 2 – Summer Blooming Clematis

- Bloom in late spring and early summer
- May rebloom later in the season
- Bloom on old and new wood

These include many popular garden varieties.

Group 3 – Late Blooming Clematis

- Bloom mid-summer through fall
- Bloom on new wood

Examples:

- Clematis viticella
- Clematis jackmanii

These are often the easiest types to prune.

HOW TO PLANT CLEMATIS

Clematis prefer sunny tops and cool roots.

Sun Requirements

- Full sun to partial shade
- Ideally 6 hours of sun daily

However:

- Roots should stay cool and shaded.

Soil Requirements

Clematis prefer:

- Rich, well-drained soil
- Neutral to slightly alkaline soil
- Consistent moisture
- Amend soil with compost before planting with Sea Soil, Gardenworks Composted Mushroom Manure or Gardenworks Composted Cattle Manure

Planting Steps

1. Dig a hole twice as wide as the root ball.
2. Add compost to improve soil.
3. Plant slightly deeper than the nursery pot (this protects stems).
4. Water thoroughly with GW Transplanting Fertilizer 5-15-5 to encourage root development
5. Mulch the root zone.
6. Plant low-growing plants nearby to shade the roots.

WATERING CLEMATIS

- Keep soil evenly moist
- Water deeply during dry periods
- Avoid allowing soil to dry completely
- Mulch annually to maintain moisture
- Young clematis require consistent watering during establishment.

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FERTILIZING CLEMATIS

- Apply compost in early spring
- Use balanced slow-release fertilizer if needed, we recommend Gardenworks All Purpose Plant Food 6-8-6
- Avoid excessive nitrogen

Healthy soil supports strong flowering.

PRUNING CLEMATIS (BY GROUP)

Pruning depends on the clematis type.

Group 1 Clematis

- Prune after flowering
- Remove dead or damaged stems only
- Minimal pruning needed

Group 2 Clematis

- Light prune in early spring
- Remove weak or damaged stems
- Deadhead after first bloom to encourage rebloom

Group 3 Clematis

- Prune hard in late winter or early spring
- Cut stems back to 12-18 inches
- New growth produces flowers

Clematis Pruning Quick Guide

Clematis varieties are divided into three pruning groups based on when they flower. Knowing your group helps ensure you prune at the right time and avoid removing flower buds.

QUICK PRUNING CHART

Clematis Group	Bloom Time	Blooms On	When to Prune	How Much to Prune	Examples
Group 1 - Early Blooming	Early spring	Old wood	After flowering	Minimal pruning	Clematis armandii, Clematis montana
Group 2 - Summer Blooming	Late spring to early summer	Old & new wood	Light prune in early spring	Remove weak or dead stems	Many large-flowered hybrids
Group 3 - Late Blooming	Mid-summer to fall	New wood	Late winter or early spring	Cut back to 12-18 inches	Clematis viticella, Clematis jackmanii

Simple Rule to Remember

Early bloomers → prune after flowering

Late bloomers → prune in early spring

When in doubt, prune lightly until you confirm the variety.

SPECIAL NOTE FOR EVERGREEN CLEMATIS

Evergreen clematis (such as Clematis armandii) belong to Pruning Group 1.

Important care differences:

- Prune only after flowering
- Avoid heavy pruning
- Protect from cold winter winds
- Best suited to South Coastal BC's mild climate

**Evergreen clematis will struggle in colder inland regions like Penticton.*

EVERGREEN CLEMATIS CARE

Evergreen clematis differ slightly from deciduous types. Common species include Clematis armandii. A very fast-growing variety once established

Climate Suitability:

Evergreen clematis grow best in mild coastal climates.

Key Care Differences

- Protect from cold winter winds
- Plant in sheltered locations
- Avoid harsh winter pruning
- Provide strong support structures
- Tolerant of lower light levels

They produce fragrant white flowers in early spring and maintain foliage year-round.

Evergreen clematis are best suited to South Coastal BC gardens.

GARDENWORKS

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GROWING CLEMATIS IN SOUTH COASTAL BC

Coastal BC provides excellent conditions for many clematis varieties.

Climate Advantages

- Mild winters
- Moderate summer heat
- Longer growing season

Both deciduous and evergreen clematis perform well here.

Coastal Considerations

- Ensure good drainage in clay soils
- Provide sturdy supports such as trellises or arbors
- Protect early spring blooms from strong winds

Evergreen clematis perform especially well in coastal climates.

GROWING CLEMATIS IN PENTICTON & THE OKANAGAN

Clematis grow well inland but require slightly different care.

Climate Challenges

- Hot, dry summers
- Colder winter temperatures
- Rapid soil drying

Inland Care Adjustments

- Provide afternoon shade for roots
- Water deeply and consistently
- Mulch heavily to conserve moisture
- Protect young plants during winter

Group 3 clematis are often the most reliable inland.

**Evergreen clematis generally do not perform well in Penticton due to colder winters.*

COMPANION PLANTS FOR CLEMATIS

Clematis pair beautifully with shrubs and perennials that support shaded roots.

Shrub Companions

- Roses
- Hydrangeas
- Ninebark
- Spirea (non-invasive varieties)

Perennial Companions

- Salvia
- Catmint (Nepeta)
- Heuchera
- Hellebores

Ground Layer

- Hardy geranium
- Creeping thyme
- Epimedium

SEASONAL CLEMATIS CARE CALENDAR

Early Spring

- Prune Group 2 and Group 3 varieties
- Apply compost

Late Spring

- Support new growth
- Monitor moisture

Summer

- Water during dry periods
- Deadhead reblooming varieties

Fall

- Maintain mulch
- Avoid heavy pruning

Winter

- Protect young plants inland

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CLEMATIS FAQs

Why isn't my clematis blooming?

Incorrect pruning is the most common cause.

Can evergreen clematis grow in Penticton?

They will struggle due to colder winter temperatures and we do not recommend them for our Penticton guests.

Do clematis need full sun?

They prefer sunny tops and shaded roots.

When should I prune clematis in BC?

It depends on the clematis group — early, mid, or late flowering.