



Pruning Clematis

Clematis can be a very confusing group of plants to prune, since they are not all pruned the same way. There are three methods that can be applied to major groups depending on the time of year the plant flowers. The earliest flowering clematis bloom on old wood from the previous season's growth. Types that flower later in the season must produce new growth in order for flower buds to form. If no pruning is done, the plant will still grow and flower, but you will not enjoy the same display you would if pruning was done properly.

Group #1: This group produces their flowers on stems produced from the previous season's growth. Pruning isn't necessary with this group, but from time to time pruning is beneficial in controlling the shape and size. If you decide to prune, do so immediately after the plant has finished blooming. This allows time for new growth to produce flower buds for the next season. This group consists of *C. alpina*, *macropetala*, and *montana*.

Group#2: This group produces their flowers on old or previous season's stems. Prune these clematis moderately in very early spring before new growth emerges. Begin by removing any dead or weak stems, then cut back the remaining stems to the topmost pair of large buds. Clematis in this group have a tendency to become leafless at the base as they mature. You can hide the leafless stems by planting low growing perennials or shrubs. Plants in this group include large-flowering hybrids such as Nelly Moser, Niobe, and Dr. Ruppel.

Group #3: The plants in this group produce their flowers on new growth. The old growth should be removed to allow the current season's stems room to grow, giving the plant a fresh start each year. Prune this group in early spring, before new growth emerges. Remove all old top growth down to about 12-18" above ground level. Plants in this group include *C. viticella*, *tangutica*, *x jackmanii*, and *paniculata*.