

## Clematis in July

I do not fertilize my clematis during our hottest months, which are July and August. I let my clematis rest during these two months because of our intense Texas heat and sun. However, I do apply liquid seaweed or fish emulsion during these two months. I think it help the plants withstand the stress.

One of the most disappointing setbacks you can encounter is having your gorgeous clematis plant completely collapse or wilt. Clematis wilt is caused by infection with a fungus

which results in the sudden wilting and collapse of the upper parts of the plant. If this should happen to one of your clematis, treat it as though it were any diseased plant and carefully cut and remove the stems of the plant all the way down to the ground. Make sure you sterilize your clippers. This



can be done by wiping your clippers with a solution of bleach and water. The usual ratio is 1 part bleach to 9 parts water. Using a 1 cup measuring cup, this would be 1 cup bleach to 9 cups water. Put the dead clippings of the diseased plant immediately into a plastic bag and discard. Be sure the dead clippings do not make contact with any other clematis in your garden. Most of the times when this has happened to my clematis in my garden, the clematis come back and send up even stronger stems than before.



Another problem that clematis growers might encounter is the bottom leaves of a clematis vine turning brown. Some clematis cultivars brown their lower leaves in the heat of the summer and after they are done blooming. There is little that can be done to stop this. Other clematis will lose the lower leaves because they are being shaded and not able

to do their job, so the plant gets rid of them. My guess is that this is just something that occurs in a natural cycle of the plant. I prune the dead leaves away, keep the plant well watered and make sure it has a good layer of hardwood mulch.