

Clematis in September

In September give your clematis its final application of fertilizer that is high in phosphorus. This will help flower development the following season. Do not use a fertilizer which is high in nitrogen. This would stimulate new leaf growth, which is unnecessary at this time of year. Also, be sure your plants are well mulched as to tuck them in for the cold winter months that are ahead. It is important for clematis to go through a dormant period.

Clematis may be planted in the fall provided you can find a healthy plant. You'll have more of a chance of success if you purchase a new clematis plant from your local nursery instead of chain stores who often neglect watering their plants. Often I see clematis in the fall struggling to keep alive because of the intense heat that they have endured during the hottest months of July and August. Usually plants that are purchased online have been grown in greenhouses in Minnesota, California or other states; therefore, the plants have not been stressed nor encountered the extreme heat and sun of Texas and, in my opinion, are often healthier plants. Also, most plants purchased online or from catalogs are usually guaranteed for a period of time.

If you purchase a new clematis plant in the fall, you will need to plant it as soon as possible. To do so, the planting site needs to have rich, loose, well-drained soil that will permit a free run of the roots. It does best where its tops are in full sun, yet its roots are shaded. Direct continuous bright sunlight bleaches the flowers of clematis, leaving their color dingy and washed-out looking.

Water the clematis plant thoroughly in the container before you plant it. Dig a planting hole twice as wide as the pot in which the plant is growing and at least twice as deep. This large hole allows for more room for soil amendment, if needed, and it gives the roots of your clematis plenty of room to grow and spread. Personally, I add a handful of dry molasses, another handful of earthworm castings, compost, and mix in with the original soil. If drainage is a problem, I add expanded shale, too. Next, I immerse the container in which the plant is growing, in a bucket of water for about ten to fifteen minutes to thoroughly wet the compost, amendments, and soil and enable the uptake of water by the roots. Once you have prepared your soil, make sure you carefully remove the root ball from its container.

Never pull your plant out of the container. Gently tilt the container on its side and press on all sides of the container until the plant feels loose. Then, gently remove the plant from its container and add a sufficient amount of your amended topsoil. Some resources state to plant clematis so that it will be three inches to five inches below ground level and to remove any leaves that will be under the soil. However, I have planted them at the same level as the container and they have performed just as well as those that were planted three to five inches below ground level. You might want to experiment for yourself, but I personally don't feel that we get cold enough in our area to plant them deeply. It is important to leave the original support stake or trellis in place for at least the first year in order for the clematis to become established. Water the clematis thoroughly after planting. Again, I use liquid seaweed, being careful to follow the directions on the container. When I plant a new clematis in my garden in the fall, I do not fertilize them with any additional fertilizer, and I certainly wouldn't recommend fertilizing a new plant with a fertilizer that is high in phosphorus in the fall...not when winter is approaching. It's kind of like you're tucking a new plant in for the approaching winter weather that is to come.