

Clematis in June

Clematis will bloom more often when deadheaded. Many gardeners love the fluffy seed heads of clematis; however, if seed heads are left on the plant, they will keep your plant from producing more flowers.

I continue to fertilize my clematis during the growing season, but I don't fertilize after the month of June. I let my clematis rest during the months of July and August because of the intense Texas sun and heat. I will prune if needed and give them a final fall feeding in September.

It is well to remember that the older a clematis gets, the bigger and more prolific the blooms. The first year it is planted, you might have a few small blooms, but don't get discouraged by the first year's show; it will reward you in years to come.

The best time to plant clematis is in the spring or fall; however, I have found that availability of clematis in the nurseries is somewhat scarce. Recently, I have found 'Ramona' clematis available in the local nurseries. 'Ramona' is an excellent clematis variety that performs superb in Parker County, and it's one of my favorites. You can still plant clematis this month, but after June, I'm reluctant to recommend planting them. In my opinion, I'd wait till September. The intense summer heat is really hard on plants, and one will have a better chance of success if planting clematis in the fall. However, when selecting clematis in the fall, one has to be sure that the plant is healthy and not a plant that has struggled in a container in the nursery all summer long. Often, if I can't find a healthy clematis in the nurseries in the fall, I order online from a reputable clematis specialist grower. One can Google 'Donahue's Greenhouse' and find many, many varieties of clematis. Donahue's specialize in clematis. I have always found them knowledgeable and eager to help either from telephone and/or email. The plants I have ordered online have always arrived healthy and have performed as good if not better than the ones I've purchased from local nurseries. You might want to do your researching of varieties, but place your order later on so the delivery date will be closer to planting time in the fall. The only downside to ordering online is shipping cost.

In my opinion, the easiest varieties of clematis to grow in Parker County are: 'Ramona', 'Josephine', *Texensis* 'Duchess of Albany', 'Niobe', 'Asao', 'Henryi', 'The President', and 'Nelly Moser'. I am not including 'Sweet Autumn' on my list as I feel that this one reseeds so readily that I wouldn't recommend it to anyone to plant; however, it is extremely easy to grow, matter of fact, I don't think anyone can kill this variety...I've tried to kill two 'Sweet Autumn' plants in my garden that came from reseeding, and I've been unsuccessful at killing them for at least the past 3 years. I noticed just last week that both seedling plants are back again this year with a vengeance.