

## **Clematis in May**

Continue to train the tendrils on established clematis as they continue to climb vigorously. Also, feed your established clematis with the same fertilizer that you use on your roses or daylilies. A well-fed clematis is a happy clematis, and a healthy plant is more capable of resisting disease and less susceptible to stem rot. The correct time to start feeding depends on the weather. Generally, the ground temperature should be above 55°F. This is when your plant starts to become active and needs nutrients in order to grow. When fertilizing, always read and follow the directions on the label concerning the rate of application and how often to apply the fertilizer. Be sure to keep the fertilizer away from the stems of your clematis to avoid burning them. When applying granular fertilizers, be careful not to let the fertilizer touch any of the leaves of the plant. Immediately wash off any excess fertilizer that may land on the foliage; this will prevent burning. Always water thoroughly after applying fertilizer. Never feed a sick plant as it is not good to stimulate new growth when your plant is ailing since it needs to use its energy to recover. Also, do not feed a dormant plant. Personally, I feed my clematis about every three weeks during their growing season. I do not fertilize my clematis during our hottest months, which are July and August. Be sure to give your clematis plenty of water if it is windy and/or the season is dry. To check for moisture, simply put your finger down into the soil and see if you can feel any moisture in the soil. If it's dry, then water. I suggest you water clematis as you would roses. Water thoroughly and deeply.

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.