



## *Bucks Country Gardens*

### **A Basic Guide to Clematis**

**Location:** The ideal location is where the base of the plant will be shaded, the top in sun. Generally, an eastern exposure is good. The planting site should get at least a half-day of sun.

**Soil Conditions:** Clematis need a deep, well-drained, well-enriched soil with a pH in the neutral range (7.0pH). Prepare the soil to a depth and width of 2 feet; mix soil with peat, sand, and a handful of lime. The plant should be set in the hole so that the crown is at ground level. Keep the growing area cool by using mulch, planting annuals or planting a shallow-rooted ground –cover. Protect the base of the plant in the winter by applying shredded bark mulch, leaves, evergreen branches or straw.

**Watering and Fertilizing:** Water your new Clematis freely and often in the first year. After the first year soak the roots well once a week during dry weather. Clematis should be fed twice a season with a good garden fertilizer (such as 5-10-10). Ample moisture and fertilizer are necessary for abundant flowering.

**Pruning Techniques:** Prune your clematis 6-12 inches above ground level in the following spring after its original planting. To encourage further branching, pinch out the tips of growing shoots during late spring, removing weak and dead wood. Also, lightly prune back after each flush of bloom to encourage further blooming.

**\*Please note: some varieties bloom on new growth, others may require a much older wood as possible to bloom heavily. If you are unsure as to which group your clematis variety falls into keep pruning minimal.**

**Insect and Disease Control:** Clematis problems are minimal but the occasional damage caused from aphids can be quickly cleaned up with Malathion or Orthene. If your plant has been grown in a hot, dry location, a disease called “Clematis Wilt” may weaken individual stems at the soil level and cause them to wilt. If this should occur, shade the soil first by applying mulch or by planting annuals nearby. Then, apply a thorough spray of Benomyl fungicide. Generally, new growth will develop in just a few weeks.

**Uses for Your Clematis:** You’ll enjoy the versatility of these plants. They’re ideal when planted by lampposts, fences, arbors, and latticework, brush piles and mail boxes- just about any place that needs to be beautified! Be creative, try growing one with a shrub or small tree so that when the clematis is in bloom the tree (or shrub) appears to be blooming. There are dozens of ways to use clematis, the “Queen of Vines”!!

For more information concerning clematis-varieties, growing techniques-refer to books we offer at the garden center.