

I.C.I.S. - Pruning Clematis

These pruning suggestions are for established vines that have been in the ground for at least three years. Younger vines should all be pruned to 12 inches the second spring and to 18 inches the third spring. It helps to develop more shoots and a fuller vine.

Bill Bird, USA.

- **Identifying the Pruning Group**
- **Pruning Group 1**
- **Pruning Group 2**
- **Pruning Group 3**

Identifying the Pruning Group

If you know what variety or cultivar your clematis is then you can prune according to whether it is Group 1, 2 or 3, see below.

If you do not know which group your clematis is in then try the following. People living in the Northern Hemisphere should determine whether the plant flowers before or after July. If it flowers before July treat as Group 1 or 2 otherwise as Group 3.

If you live in the Southern Hemisphere and your Clematis flowers before January treat as Group 1 or 2 otherwise as Group 3.

Fiona Woolfenden

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Pruning Group 1

No pruning required. If you need to prune to keep the plant in the space you have allotted it then prune immediately after flowering.

These varieties flower on the old wood so if you prune them you will loose next year's early flush of flowers. However, in some very cold countries the more tender varieties, such as montanas, may be be pruned to the ground by harsh winters.

Examples: alpinas, macropetelas, montanas, armandii, early species.

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Pruning Group 2

These are the large flowered hybrids that bloom in the spring and again in the fall. They bloom on 'old wood' (actually on short shoots from old wood) and should not be pruned except for deadwood. It is best to wait until late spring to see if the vines are indeed dead before pruning since new sprouts can emerge from some very dead looking vines.

A suggestion - The second bloom is increased if the seed heads are removed right after the first blooms drop their sepals. *Bill Bird, New York, USA.*

In Canada you should get two flushes of flowers if you just clean out the old wood and prune to a bud 3'-4' above the ground. Prune as soon as possible after flowering. *Peter Keeping, Ontario, Canada.*

Examples: Nelly Moser, The President, Silver moon, Asao, H.F. Young, Liberation, Mrs Cholmondeley, Moonlight, Will Goodwin, William Kennet. This list is endless!

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Pruning Group 3

Prune hard in spring.

In Great Britain I prune these plants by two thirds in the autumn and then again in the spring down to the lowest buds or pair of nodes. I find that this helps reduce wind rock and enables me to tidy the garden up over the winter as opposed to having to do it all in the spring.

From the USA: These plants bloom on new wood and should be pruned back severely every year in late winter to about 12 inches. Leave at least two pairs of buds (4) on each leg of the plant. These vines are very fast growing and will reach their full height before blooming every summer. If you fail to prune these, they will develop long 'legs' that get woody and are devoid of foliage and blooms. *Bill Bird, New York, USA.*

However, Clematis growers in Canada may like to head this advice: **Do not** prune any Clematis in autumn or it will die back to the roots and may not come back or will not do well the following year. *Peter Keeping, Ontario, Canada.*

Examples: All viticellas, all texensis, all herbaceous types, late flowering large-flowered varieties such as Jackmanii, Hagley Hybrid, Ernest Markham, Comtesse de Bouchaud and Perle d'Azure.

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