

HARLEQUIN'S GARDENS

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PLANTING CONTAINER-GROWN CLEMATIS

Clematis can be planted at any time during the growing season, as long as the soil is workable. All clematis require well-drained, neutral to moderately alkaline soil, and most thrive on a regular supply of balanced nutrients and moisture. Fertile, loamy soil is ideal. Organic amendments such as compost, well-rotted manure, or mushroom compost should be added. In heavy soils, add expanded shale, squeegee gravel or Lava Sand in addition to compost.

Ideally, the planting hole should be at least twice as wide as the pot, and at least twice as deep (18" x 18" is best). Place the soil you've removed in a wheelbarrow and mix in the soil amendments so that you have a ratio of 3 parts soil to 2 to 3 parts amendments. To this you can also add in ¼ cup of a non-burning organic fertilizer. Mix thoroughly.

Loosen the base and sides of the planting hole with a garden fork (digging fork). Place a 4" deep layer of compost or composted manure in the base of the hole. Cover this with a layer of your backfill soil-mix.

Thoroughly water your Clematis plant in the container (if possible, immerse in a bucket for at least 10 minutes). Ease the plant, with the cane support, out of the container. Gently loosen the roots at the bottom of the root-ball to encourage quick growth into the surrounding soil. Place the rootball in the prepared planting hole so the top surface of the rootball is at least 2 ½" (4" is better) below the rim of the hole. This encourages the development of healthy new shoots, reduces the risk of wilt, and keeps the roots cooler and moister. (Only the herbaceous species, such as *C. integrifolia*, *C. heracleifolia*, *C. hirsutissima*, *C. recta*, *C. fremontii* and *C. scottii* should be planted even with the rim of the hole).

When the plant is in position, fill in around the rootball with the amended backfill. Gently firm the soil around the rootball.

Cover the base of the plant with a mulch of additional compost, but don't allow it to touch the stems. Low-growing perennials or ground-covers may be planted nearby to shade the root zone of the Clematis, so long as they will not root along their stems or spread by underground runners.

Water well, at least 1 gallon per plant. Water every 3 days for the first 2 weeks, and weekly after that. During prolonged spells of hot, dry or windy weather, it is important to water newly planted Clematis regularly.

Attach a permanent name label (preferably to the support that your Clematis will climb on) so you don't lose track of its identity.

Support: Clematis vines climb or clamber by wrapping their leaf-stems around a thin support, so the support fence or trellis must be made of wires, net, twigs, slats, rods, etc. that are of small diameter. To grow a Clematis against a wall or solid fence, a trellis or net must be attached in front of the wall or fence.