



Henderson County Master Gardeners Weekly News Article February 05, 2018

Guide to Pruning Clematis

by Lydia Holley

Do you have clematis in your garden? Once you have grown one, you may just become addicted to these beautiful flowering vines. Some gardeners are reluctant to grow clematis because pruning them seems complicated. I will try to simplify it for you.



There are three different pruning instructions for established clematis, one for each of the three main types. Type 1 (or A) needs little to no pruning, Type 2 (or B), needs light pruning, and Type 3 (or C), needs hard pruning. The severity of pruning as well as the pruning schedule makes sense when you look into the reasons behind the differences.

Type 1 flowers in spring on old wood. If you prune this type in early spring, you will cut off the flower buds, and they will need another year to make more. Wait until this type flowers in spring before pruning. Prune lightly, back to a healthy bud. Because they need old wood to flower, some guides will tell you to only prune these types, even lightly, only every three years or so, or not at all.

Some Type 1's are *Clematis montana*, *Clematis macropetala*, *Clematis armandii* (evergreen clematis), and *Clematis cirrhosa*.

Type 2 are generally called the large-flowering group. They often repeat bloom. Prune in late winter to early spring (around February). You can also prune immediately after its summertime bloom for a repeat flowering. Cut back 6 to 12 inches from the top, pruning to just above healthy buds. If you prefer, it is also possible for you to prune these every two or three years.

Clematis in this group include Belle or Woking, Nelly Moser, Duchess of Edinburgh, Henryi, Niobe, and *Clematis florida*.

Type 3 are vigorous vines. They flower in late summer or fall, on new growth. These can be pruned in late winter or early spring (again, around February), to the lowest pair of healthy buds (usually 6 to 12 inches from the ground). Pruning hard will help control its growth. You may prune lighter for a few years if you are wanting your vine to cover a large structure.

Type 3's include *Clematis terniflora* (sweet autumn clematis), *Jackmanii*, *Clematis texensis*, *Perle d'Azure*, *Duchess of Albany*, *Etiole Violette*, and *Clematis viticella*.

It can be difficult to remember which type of clematis is planted where in your garden, especially if you are outdoors with pruners in your hand. I have a trick for remembering when to prune clematis: use the complimentary plant's pruning schedule.

For instance, plant Type 2 clematis with shrub roses. When pruning your roses in February, it is easy to prune your clematis at the same time. Use Type 3 clematis for structures where they can ramble, such as garage walls, arbors or pergolas. You may wish to grow shorter type 3's with climbing roses, since their pruning schedules coordinate. Planting type 3's on your climbers and type 2's on your shrub roses will help you remember the different pruning requirements. Type 1's, depending on mature size, can be used with plants you would not normally prune, or prune lightly in winter or early spring, such as azaleas, Indian hawthorns, or tall spring-blooming camellias. You can then prune the clematis and the shrub after both have flowered, if needed. You could also plant these along a fence or up a tree if mature size is very large.

Do not let the fear of pruning keep you from adding another layer of beauty to your garden with these delicate-looking but hard-working plants.

For more information, call 903-675-6130, email hendersonCMGA@gmail.com or visit www.henderson-co-tx-mg.org.