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CLEMATIS CARE INSTRUCTIONS

Clematis are the queens of the climbers. They don't reach their full potential the first year, but they get better with age. Clematis can live for decades and give you years of enjoyment. Here are a few tips for properly planting and maintaining your clematis so that you may enjoy it to its full potential.

1. Pick a sunny spot where it will have plenty of room and support to climb. As a general rule, clematis like their leafy tops in bright sun and their roots in cool, moist shade. One suggestion is to plant small shrubs around the clematis to shade it. Most clematis **need** at least a half day of sun in order for them to bloom well.
2. For best results, dig a hole about 18" deep. If your soil is heavy clay, add some peat moss or other amendments to break up the clay. Put about 6" of well-rotted manure or compost in the bottom of the hole and cover with a small layer of top soil. Place the well watered clematis in the hole just under the soil line. Finish filling the hole with the prepared soil.
3. Carefully attach the bottom of the vine to a cane and lean the cane over to the trellis, etc. that you wish for the clematis to climb on. Then push the cane into the soil so that the vine stem is fairly stable. This step helps prevent the stem from being broken or weakened by animals, weather, etc. It is important not to damage the base of your newly planted clematis.
4. Generally speaking, there are 3 major pruning categories for clematis. ***When buying a clematis, you might consider checking the pruning requirements first – this will help you get the right kind of clematis for your needs.***
 - a) **Category #1 – Blooms only on previous year's growth.** Best to prune immediately after the first early season bloom. This allows the clematis to grow and prepare for the next bloom time. Some varieties will also bloom again in late summer but just not as much. *It is important to prune right after blooming* if you want it to re-bloom later in the season or you want the maximum amount of blooms the following year. Several clematis in this category are vigorous and can get out of hand if not pruned. Montana varieties are examples of category 1 clematis.
 - b) **Category #2 – Blooms on previous year's growth and new growth.** These varieties don't normally require a lot of pruning except to keep their shape and/or size and to get rid of weak or dead stems. A light pruning in early spring (February or March) to shape the plant can be done and also a pruning *immediately* after the first bloom, if necessary, so as to not interfere with their re-bloom later in the summer. If your clematis has been neglected for a few years, a hard pruning in early spring can rejuvenate the plant. A hard pruning consists of cutting the stems back to 2 or 3 strong sets of buds close to the ground. Henryi and Nelly Moser are examples of category 2.
 - c) **Category #3 – Blooms only on current year's growth.** These should be pruned back to 2 or 3 strong sets of buds above the ground (called a hard pruning) each spring right before they break dormancy (February or March). This gives you blooms from the ground up each year. Jackmanii and viticella types fall in this category.