



Clematis Contained: Growing Clematis in Containers

Why grow clematis in containers? Most would prefer to be in the ground, but sometimes our garden soil is not hospitable, we have too small a garden for large varieties, or we want to add a vertical element to a vignette of planted pots.

Which pots are best for clematis? Clematis roots grow out slightly from the crown before growing straight down, so depth is more important than width. Remember that large-flowered hybrids need to be buried 2-3 inches below the level of the soil in the pot when they are planted. A good starting point is 12" wide and 16" deep, or larger. Avoid plastic (gets too hot) and terra cotta (wicks water away from soil). The best option is high-fired, glazed pottery; thick cement works well, too.

What soil works best? Ask your local nursery to recommend a good long-term container potting mix. At the RCG we have our own potting mix. It has aged bark (not raw), pumice (water retention and aeration), sand (for drainage), and coir fiber (small particles to catch and release water). This means the soil takes longer to break down into a wet chocolate cake texture that will kill your plant. Avoid vermiculite: it encourages soil mildew. Avoid peat moss: it acidifies the soil.

Who to grow? If you enjoy making hyper-tufa troughs, try the following species: *Clematis albicoma*, *coactilis*, *columbiana* (all forms), *fremontii*, *hirsutissima* (all forms), *marmoraria*, and *occidentalis* (all forms) to name but a few.

Small flowered hybrids that will enjoy improved drainage (add 1/3 chicken grit to the soil mix in a regular pot): 'Brunette', *x cartmanii* 'Lunar Lass', *koreana* var. *fragrans*, 'Little Artist', *macropetala* 'Lagoon' and 'Wesselton', 'Pixie'. For shade try 'Bells of Emei Shan' (it drapes!). (Evergreen clematis related to *C. armandii* hate living in pots.)

Large-flowered Hybrids (look for plants maturing at 6-8 feet or shorter):

Abilene™ 'Evipo027'	Josephine™ 'Evijohill'
Alaina™ 'Evipo056'	'Julka'
Alita™ 'Evipo070'	'Justa'
'Ashva'	Kingfisher™ 'Evipo037'
Bijou™ 'Evipo030'	'Louise Rowe'
'Blue Eyes'	'Miniseelik'
'Burma Star'	'Miss Bateman'
Cezanne™ 'Evipo023'	'Mrs. N Thompson'
Chelsea™ 'Evipo040'	'Murasakihime'
'Diamond Ball'	'Piilu' Little Duckling™
Diana's Delight™ 'Evipo026'	Rebecca™ 'Evipo016'
'Edouard Desfossé'	Samaritan Jo™ 'Evopi075'
Filigree™ 'Evipo029'	'Sano-no-murasaki'
Fleuri™ 'Evopi042'	'Semu'
'Fond Memories'	'Snow Queen'
'Ilka'	'Solidarnosc'
'Innocent Blush'	'Stefan Franczak'
	'Toki'

Don't forget your growing zone: in winter in zone 6 or lower, you will find container-grown clematis need protection from long periods of profound cold.