

## Bush Type Clematis: A Garden Treasure

Last week we looked at some great cultivars of bush or herbaceous clematis that die back to the ground in winter and emerging from the base in spring. These shrub or upright clematis are great for individual specimens or can be allowed to weave as a groundcover through a shrub or perennial border. Here are a few more cultivars to consider for addition to your gardens.

- **Rock clematis** , *Clematis columbiana* var . *tenuiloba*

This prized rock garden clematis has ascending or erect 6” non-vining stems with longer stems trailing or leaning on neighboring vegetation or rocks. The slender, light blue flowers are held above the foliage in a nodding fashion. Prefers part shade and thrives in clay, limestone rubble or garden loam. When well-established this clematis is very long-lived. This lovely Black Hills native is hard to find, but worth looking for.

- **Sugarbowl Clematis** , *Clematis scottii*

This beautiful rock garden clematis is from the southern foothills of Colorado 's Front Range , yet its winter hardy to 30 below. This non-vining clematis is slow to get going, but is a long-lived perennial when grown in rich, well-drained soils and full sun to part shade. It has showy 1” deep blue, bell-shaped flowers followed by fuzzy seedheads.

- **Tube Clematis** , *Clematis heracleifolia* var.  *davidiana*

This China native is a tough clematis, with handsome, dark green leaves forming a 4'high perennial shrub. In late summer it is topped with lightly scented clusters of small, pale blue flowers that open with recurved petals. This easy-to-grow clematis needs full sun or the blooms will be sparse and the plant will be floppy. The seedheads are also very attractive. The cultivar 'China Purple' has deep purple-blue flowers.

- **Bush Clematis** , *Clematis integrifolia*

This is the most common herbaceous clematis, growing up to 2' tall with nodding steel blue flowers over upright clumps with many stems. This summer bloomer needs full sun or the plant will be floppy. If you prune the plant back after flowering, it will bloom again in late summer or early fall. Look for splendid new cultivars of bush clematis hybrids, such as 'Olgae' with large blue, bell-like flowers; 'Rosea' with clear sugar pink bells; 'Arabelle' with deep blue-mauve 3” flowers; and 'Hanajina' with purple-pink bells.

- **Mrs. Robert Brydon Clematis**, *Clematis x jouiniana*

I grow this hardy, easy-to grow clematis as a groundcover between large shrubs. It's a vigorous, non-clinging vine with many small bluish-white flowers in late summer to fall. In cold climates it dies back to the ground in winter and you'll have to cut the stems back in early spring. Growing to 10' it can be tied, allowed to cascade over a wall or used as a groundcover over an old tree stump.

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