



Welcome to my weekly series!
ASK THE LANDSCAPE PROFESSIONAL

Linda K. Lillie of Sprigs & Twigs

Linda K. Lillie has been President of Sprigs & Twigs, Inc. for the last 25 years. She is a graduate of Connecticut College in Botany, an accredited NOFA Organic Land Care Professional, a Connecticut Master Gardener and a national award winning landscape designer for her design and installation projects.

Dear Linda,

Thanks for all of your helpful advice. I have a clematis growing on my lamp post. Every year it looks great and has many flower buds. Then all of a sudden, just when the buds get big, they droop and the vine wilts. It is very disappointing and frustrating. Is there anything I can do to prevent this from happening? Thank you. Jeff in Mystic.

Hi Jeff,

Your clematis in the photo looks very happy and healthy. I have three possibilities why some of the flower buds are hanging down:

1. Your plant is going to produce large flowers and large flowers will weigh down the vine and droop.
2. It may be a sign that the vine needs water. The flowers are just forming and need water to produce strong, supple flowers and stems. Watering will help the bud stems to stiffen and hold up the flower. We have not been getting enough natural rainfall lately, so I recommend you add (1) 5 gallon bucket of water to the roots per week. Do not water the leaves and only water in the morning to allow the plant to dry out during the day. Don't over-water. Overwatering can cause Clematis Wilt, a fungal disease that is detrimental to the Clematis. There's no need to supplement with additional water if we get a good soaking of natural rainfall on a regular basis (at least once/week). If you are unsure about whether to water, use your finger to check the soil moisture around the Clematis roots by inserting your finger into the soil. If the soil is moist all the way down to the roots (2"-6" down), then there's no need to water. If the soil is moist only on the surface... you need to water.
3. Finally, I don't know the cultivar of your Clematis, but some Clematis naturally have drooping flower buds.



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