

Notes on Andrew Poliquin talk on Clematis to BLGC on January 19th 2019

Prepared by David Oldacre May 10th 2019

From the BLGC Newsletter

Back by popular demand! André Poliquin, well known horticultural enthusiast, speaker, veteran researcher, devoted gardener, and plant collector. André who is well known both in Quebec and elsewhere for his extensive knowledge of orchids, roses and clematis will be enlightening us with his many years of research on Clematis. In fact, he has written a book on growing clematis in Quebec. Learn about this plant group: choosing, planting, and pruning: a great way to add vertical elements to your garden!

About André Poliquin

A trained biologist, André Poliquin worked in teaching and research before retiring in 2010. Passionate about horticulture for more than 40 years, he is recognized both in Quebec and abroad as a specialist in the cultivation of clematis, orchids and roses.

Other References

Raymond John Evison OBE, VMH, is a nurseryman, lecturer, author and photographer. Born in 1944 he started his horticultural career at the age of 15 in Shropshire and moved to the island of Guernsey to set up The Guernsey Clematis Nursery in 1984. His website is at <https://raymondevisonclematis.com/main/home.asp>

Intro to his book "Clématites pour le Québec et est Canada"

I have copied and translated the Introduction which provides information about how he became so interested in this plant.

"To be sure, clematis is an ideal ornamental plant in landscaping. It is resistant to insects, all soils are suitable for use and can be used as a creeping plant, as a border plant, as a hedge or as a climbing plant. My interest in clematis was born of the difficulty we had in Quebec to find anything other than *Clematis jackmanii* to adorn our flower beds. When I read a first edition of Raymond Evison's book, "Making the Most of Clematis", I was surprised to learn that there are a multitude of shapes and colors in clematis, that around 250 species of different characteristics grew in the wild and many were even fragrant.

So, more than 15 years ago, I started looking for documents, addresses and plants to satisfy my curiosity. The path of the amateur is full of surprises and, in the end, I found myself with a collection of nearly 150 cultivars, a well-stocked data bank, dozens of reference books, and travel souvenirs all more enchanting than others. These trips allowed me to visit collections and to talk with other amateurs, with specialists and even with the one whose book I had read at the very beginning, Raymond Evison, who himself encouraged me to publish this book.

There is very little French documentation on the subject; moreover, the flowering periods and the degree of hardiness of the cultivars described therein are suitable for the climate of England and do not correspond, in many cases, to the conditions prevailing in Quebec. By giving the readers the results of my own cultures, I hope that the clematis will know how to take the place of honor that belongs to the garden."

Notes on the talk

There were about 60 people present for the talk on Clematis by André Poliquin which was a stellar performance. I was able to take notes for the first 45 minutes or so but had to give up after that because I could not keep up with all the information he was describing.

He started of the talk describing how he had discovered Clematis when he was a teenager and had given his father a white clematis. His father wasn't very impressed with that and told him that he needed to learn more about the topic. So that is what he did and the first thing he discovered was Raymond Evison who runs a nursesey in the Guernsey Islands. – so, he called him on his father's phone and spent rather a long time talking to him without realizing that he was incurring a rather high charge which he had to work through the summer to pay off!

The first part of the talk was on the botanical details – which were rather new to me. I did not know, for example, that the clematis is in fact was a tree, which tends to grow between Latitude 50° to 35° north. although some species can grow in the far north – Siberia, James Bay and the high mountain area of northern India and Tibet.

There are also species of Clematis growing in the southern hemisphere – a few in South America, one or two in South Africa, and several in southern Australia.

He provided two handouts which I have added to this report. The first of these is basically a summary of the major topics of his talk. The second is a list of Clematis varieties and hybrids by colour.

He went through the process of buying, planting, protecting, feeding (Clematis grow very quickly once they start to bud in the April-May time frame), pruning, (which he doesn't do). He also discussed the one fatal disease, Ascochyta, which can afflict most of the Clematis hybrids through broken stems.

The second part of the talk was a slide show of the different species of Clematis - the various types of hybrid by order of blooming and there were a lot of them.

For him the clematis hybrids are primarily for show, and because of their susceptibility to the Ascochyta they rarely get live longer than two years. His recommendation was to confine the choice to Viticella and other species which are resistant to Ascochyta which if properly planted and fed and protected can live for 150 years or more.

I have since obtained his book

[*“Clématites pour le Québec et est Canada”*](#)

which was published in June 1995 by Trecarre; ISBN: 9782892495287. However when I called the distributor of the book, but they told me it was no longer available, So I ordered a used copy from one of the Amazon contacts at a cost of \$30.93 including shipping and handling.

Clematis Handout - Andre Poliquin Page 1 - Clematis/ Tips by André Poliquin

- BUYING** Choose a plant in a large container. Height of the plant itself does not mean anything. Choose one with many healthy stems, with good staking. At least a 2 year old plant or older, pot filled with the root system.
- PLANTING** Plant in a cool and well-drained soil, at any time during the year, facing south or east for better results. Viticellas will do well in any situation. Cultivars of zones 4-5 should not be facing north. Clay soils or sandy soils must be lightly modified. Dig a large hole (3 times the size of the root ball) and cover the first nodes, without disturbing the roots. Give an angle to the hole plant (with the roots) and stake firmly. Young plants need a lot of watering; give at least 1 gallon of water per week during the first year. A plant needs at least 3 years to be established.
- STAKING** Wind is the worst enemy for Clematis. Leave any original staking and add more to facilitate lignification of the base of the stem. Then choose a sturdy and esthetical support.
- PROTECTION** Root system and the first 3 feet of the stem must be protected from heat during summer. Companion plants must not cause any damage to the root system. Early large flower clematis (group 2 or B) need a winter protection of snow in zones 3-4. This protection must also prevent early bud opening before the freezing risks are over.
- FEEDING** Clematis are very heavy feeders and fast growers. They need a food supply in spring, with addition until the blooming period (20-20-20).
- DISEASES** Young plants, but also mature plants (large flower hybrids) are sensitive to the Clematis wilt. The fungus *Ascochyta* invades the broken stem and produces many contaminant spores. Leaves loose their substance and darken from the lower part to the top within 24 hours. Discard any diseased part and add a systemic fungicide around the base of the plant.
- PRUNING** Pruning is done as soon as the flowering period is over, hence at different periods depending on the cultivar. The goal is mainly to prevent from obtaining a too large wooden trunk!! Cleaning the plant from its dead parts is done in spring, before the opening of the buds.
- CHOICE** Species from the Macropetala and Alpina genera are hardy and bloom early in spring. C.orientalis, tangutica, tibetana are all hardy. Viticelia hybrids are hardy and very easy to grow; they bloom on new stems every year. Large flower hybrids are less hardy, as are the double flower hybrids.
- COMPANION PLANTS** They must be chosen in order to shade the basal part of the clematis without damaging its root system. Hostas are an excellent choice as they grow in the same environment.

Andre Poliquin Talk – Handout Page 2 - List of Clematis varieties and hybrids by colour.

Pruning groups:

1. Most of the species- No pruning or just above a viable bud, just after flowering.
2. Early Large flowers hybrids -if pruned just after flowering in spring.
3. Many species, Viticellas and late large flowers hybrids-if pruned, severe late in autumn just after flowering.

NOTE I prune late in spring to eliminate dead stems only, otherwise I do not prune any of my established clematis...

Unless otherwise stated, the plant details are from “Description des Cultivars et des Espèces Renommés” in André Poliquin’s book “Les Clematites Pour le Québec et L’est du Canada”

COLORS	CULTIVARS-SPECIES	Bloom size	Plant height	Hardiness zone	Bloom Time
Clematis / White					
	C. Huldine (viticella) ³	10cm	6m	3	July-Oct
	C. Henryi (early large flower hybrid) ²	20cm	3.5m	3	July-Aug
	C. Mme Le Coultre (late large flower hybrid) ²⁻³	24cm	4m	4	Jun -Sept
	C. Marie Boisselot (late large flower hybrid) ²⁻³	25cm	2.5m	3	July-Aug
	C. Miss Bateman (early large flower hybrid) ²	15cm	2m	4	June-Aug
	C. Mrs George Jackman (late large flower hybrid) ²⁻³	15cm	2.5m	4	June-July
	C. Duchess of Edimburg (double, large flower hybrid) ²	10cm	2m	4	June
	C. Guernsey Cream (early large flower hybrid) ² (Note 1)	12cm	2m	4	June
	C. Arctic Queen (double, large flower hybrid) ² (Note 2)	15cm	2.5m	4	June-Aug
	<i>C. flammula</i> (species) ¹	3cm	6m	4	July-Aug
	<i>C. jouiniana</i> , (species) ¹				
	<i>C. forgesii</i> , (species) ¹				
	<i>C. alpina</i> , (species) ¹		2.5m	3	June
	<i>C. macropetala</i> (species) ¹	8cm	3.5m	4	June-Aug
	<i>C. maximowicziana (terniflora)</i> (species) ¹				
	Note 1 https://www.gardenia.net/plant/clematis-Guernsey-Cream				
	Note 2 https://garden.org/plants/view/71587/Clematis-Arctic-Queen/				
Clematis/ Pink and lilac					
	C. Hagley Hybrid (syn. Pink chiffon) (² or ³)	14cm	2.5m	4	June & Sept
	C. Mme Baron Veillard (² or ³)	12cm	4.5m	3	Aug & Sept
	C. Comtesse de Bouchaud (² or ³)	12cm	2.5m	3	June to Aug
	C. Victoria (² or ³)	15cm	3m	3	July
	C. Richard Pennell (large flower hybrid) (² or ³)	20cm	2.5m	4	June & Aug
Clematis /Pink-striped					
	C. Walter Pennell (large flower hybrid) (² or ³) Note 1	15cm	2.5m	4	May-June & Aug
	<i>C. macropetala</i> , (Species) ¹ See above				
	<i>C. alpina</i> (Species) ¹ See above				
	C. Bees' Jubilee (early large flower hybrid) ²	18cm	2.5m	3	June
	C. Dr Ruppel (early large flower hybrid) ²	22cm	3m	4	June
	C. Marcel Moser (large flower hybrid) ²	18cm	2.5m	4	June & Sept
	C. Nellie Moser (early large flower hybrid) ²	22cm	2m	4	July & October
	C. Capitaine Thuilleaux (large flower hybrid) ²	20cm	2m	4	June & Aug
	C. Sealand Gem (large flower hybrid) ²⁻³	15cm	3m	3	June & August
	Note 1: http://www.clearviewhort.com/clematis/walter-pennell				

COLORS	CULTIVARS-SPECIES	Bloom size	Plant height	Hardiness zone	Bloom Time
Clematis /Red					
	C. Crimson King (² or ³)	20cm	4m	3	June
	C. Niobe (² or ³)	15cm	2.5m	4	June & Sept
	C. Ville de Lyon (<i>viticella</i>) ¹			4	July
	C. Ernest Markham (² or ³)	15cm	4m	4	July & August
	C. Mme Edouard André (<i>viticella</i>) ³	12cm	2.5m	3	July to August
	C. Cardinal Wyszynski (² or ³)	20cm	2.5m	3	July & Sept
Clematis / Red-striped					
	C. <i>alpina</i> (species) ¹ See Above				
	C. Barbara Dibley (large flower hybrid) ²⁻³	20cm	2.5m	4	June & Sept
Clematis /Blue					
	C. Général Sikorski (large flower hybrid) ²⁻³	18cm	3m	4	June & Sept
	C. Lasurstern (large flower hybrid) ²⁻³	22cm	4m	4	June & August
	C. Perle d'Azur (<i>viticella</i>) ³	12cm	4.5m	3	July to August
	C. Will Goodwin (large flower hybrid) ²⁻³ Note 1	18cm	3m	4	June to Sept
	C. Elsa Spath (groups ² or ³)	22cm	2m	3	June
	C. Ramona (large flower hybrid) ²⁻³	20cm	4m	3	June & Sept
	C. The President (large flower hybrid) ²⁻³	19cm	3m	4	June to July
	C. Lawsoniana (large flower hybrid) ²⁻³	25cm	5m	4	June & Sept
	C. Vyvyan Pennell (large flower hybrid double) ²	20cm	4m	4	July to August
	C. <i>alpina</i> , (species) ¹ See above				
	C. <i>integrifolia</i> , (species) ¹	2.5cm	1m	3	July
	C. <i>macropetala</i> , (species) ¹ See above				
	C. <i>dauidiana</i> , (species) ¹				
	C. <i>jouiniana</i> (Species) ¹				
	Note 1: https://www.degroot-inc.com/product/clematis-will-goodwin/				
Clematis Mauve/purple					
	C. Etoile violette (<i>viticella</i>) ³			4	July
	C. Lord Nevill (large flower hybrid) ²	20cm	2.5m	4	June
	C. Jackmanii (<i>viticella</i>) ³	12cm	3m	3	June
	C. Jackmanii superba (<i>viticella</i>) ³	15cm	3m	3	June
	C. Gipsy Queen (groups ² or ³)	16cm	4m	4	June
Clematis /Purple striped					
	C. Lady Betty Balfour (large flower hybrid) ^{2,3}	16cm	5m	3	July & October
Clematis /Yellow (species)					
	C. Mrs. N. Thompson (large flower hybrid) ^{2,3}	12cm	2m	4	June
	C. <i>tangutica</i> , (species) ¹	4cm	5m	3	July to August
	C. <i>tibetana</i> , (species) ¹				
	C. <i>orientalis</i> (species) ¹	8cm	7m	4	July & October

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