

## CLEMATIS OF RECENT INTRODUCTION FROM THE WILD AND FROM CULTIVATION

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*Clematis viticella* was the first clematis species to be introduced to the UK in the mid-1500's. Since then, many fine, small-flowered cultivars have been raised from *C. viticella*, giving a good range of colours. One of the latest is a fine, deep purple blue form, which has yet to be named. It seems very free flowering and has an unusual, deep red centre.

*C. cirrhosa*, a species from southern Europe, was another early introduction to England. This quite variable species has given us several deep coloured forms, including a new one to be called *C. cirrhosa* 'Freckles'.

In my collection there are not only new clematis of recent introduction, both small and large-flowered, but also old, large-flowered cultivars and species almost lost to commercial cultivation in Europe, as a result of changing fashions and trends.

Following is described a small selection from my collection, which numbers over 300 species and cultivars.

*Clematis* 'Empress of India' is a large-flowered cultivar brought back from the U.S.A. Its pucey violet-red flowers have a light brown centre.

*C. 'Royalty'* is a new, double or semi-double clematis raised in England. Its deep violet-purple flowers have contrasting deep yellow anthers. Single flowers are produced during late summer on current season's stems.

*C. patens* is a Chinese species now naturalised in many parts of Japan. It gave the early European hybridists the opportunity of producing the large-flowered cultivars that we grow today, such as 'Nelly Moser'. In the wild in Japan, collectors have found over 25 forms of *C. patens*, even double forms.

*C. 'Asao'* is a new Japanese cultivar very typical of the early forms of *C. patens*. This rounded flowered form has tepals that are pink, which become almost red at the margins.

*C. montana* var. *Wilsonii* is an important re-introduction. This white-flowered *C. montana* flowers four weeks later than most montanas and is a plant lost to production until recently, when it was found in a garden in Herefordshire, England.

The New Zealand clematis species, I believe, will become useful plants for the sheltered patio garden or for the growing number of conservatories that are being built. *C. paniculata*, a species with bright white flowers and pink anthers has good ever-green foliage and grows to three metres. *C. forsteri* also has delight-

ful evergreen foliage that is a light apple-green colour. Its greenish-cream flowers are strongly scented.

Of the more hardy clematis, *C. alpina* is a most useful garden plant for exposed areas. Two cultivars, 'Helsingborg' (very deep violet-blue), and 'Tage Lundell', (reddish violet-blue), are fairly new introductions from Sweden—both raised by the well-known Swedish plantsman, Tage Lundell.

I found *C. alpina* var. *ochotensis* on Mount Fuji in Japan in 1984 but a different form, collected in Kamtchatka in 1922, has given Magnus Johnson in Sweden the opportunity of producing cultivars such as 'Betina', a beetroot coloured seedling.

*C. koreana*, collected in Korea during the late 1970's, is again a variable species. There is a dark purple-red form, with a pale yellow margin to the tepals, which need a light background to show the flowers off well. However, *C. koreana* 'Lutea', a pale greenish-yellow form, stands out well in any situation. Both forms are very hardy.

*C. texensis*, a species from the USA, is still rare in cultivation. Some fine forms, with upturned, deep red, pitcher-shaped flowers are now being grown in Japan. However, I am still searching for a form with foliage that does not succumb to mildew.

*C. orientalis*—the true species—has again been re-introduced from Turkey by Mr. and Mrs. Dick Banks, from Hergest Croft in Herefordshire. It has greyish-green foliage, with small, nodding flowers that are yellow but with contrasting red filaments. This species, again because of its wide natural distribution, is variable. The second form, recently re-introduced, has yellow tepals that have a central flash of red.

*C. recta*, a European species, also varies. We all long to find again the lovely double-white form that seems to be lost to cultivation. However, I recently found an extra-large flowered form in a Worcestershire garden, with flowers double the usual size of *C. recta*.

In 1981, on an expedition to China, I found a great number of clematis species, including a white form of *C. lasiandra*, a pink, pitcher-shaped flower species and a good, large-flowered form of *C. connata*. Near to our base camp at 12,500 ft. in an old part of Tibet, I found an extremely good form of *C. buchananiana*, as well as a delightful form of what was probably *C. glauca* var. *akebiodes*. Among other delights found there was also a good form of *C. gracilifolia*.

During 1984, I visited China again, this time near Beijing (Peking). At one part of the Great Wall area I found *C. hexapetala*<sup>\*</sup>, a semi-herbaceous clematis with glaucous foliage and 4cm wide

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\*Bot. ed. note: The specific epithet is incorrect. By 1886 *C. hexapetala* was already a synonym for 2 other species; *C. hexapetala* L.F. = *C. hexasepala* DC.—New Zealand, and *C. hexapetala* Pall = *C. flammula* L.—Mediterranean region.



white flowers. *C. aethusifolia* was also growing very well in that harsh climate. This delightful, pale yellow species had been re-introduced to cultivation by Roy Lancaster in 1980.

*C. heracleifolia* in its many forms also grew in this area. *C. heracleifolia* var. *dauidiana* is a great attraction to butterflies. However, Mr. Lancaster collected seed in this area in 1980 and his seedlings, raised by the author, produced plants with deep blue flowers. One has been named *C. heracleifolia* 'Manchu'. Seedlings raised from this selection have given yet again different blue forms from their parent, proving once more that such a great deal of selection work has to be done with plant introduction from the wild.

Another good re-introduction by Roy Lancaster from China is *C. chrysocoma*. This has been grown for many years in gardens but the true species had been lost to cultivation. Its stunning white flowers have yellow anthers.

*C. kirilowii*, a species native to the Beijing area of China, was found during my 1984 visit. Its 2.5cm white flowers, produced in great abundance, make it a welcome introduction to the range of garden clematis.

*C. florida sieboldii* (syn. *C. florida* var. *bicolor*) was introduced to England from Japan via The Netherlands in 1837, soon followed by its sport, *C. florida* 'Alba Plena.' Neither of these plants have been widely grown until recently because of propagation difficulties. The great excitement that recently occurred is that *C. florida* sported, or reverted back to the true *C. florida* 'Alba Plena' in our Guernsey nursery in mid-July, 1988. If we are able to propagate from this stem, we shall once again have the true *C. florida* in cultivation, a plant used by the old hybridists of China and Japan long before we in Europe knew of the existence of large-flowered clematis species. This will give us the opportunity of re-creating many of the old crosses which produced the large-flowered clematis of today.