

CLEMATIS WILT

Clematis wilt is a common and widespread problem but the causes are usually misunderstood. The symptoms can arise from several causes, however the treatment always remains the same.

Symptoms The younger leaves droop suddenly and the affected stalks blacken and the leaves wilt and die. This whole process only takes a couple of days or in some cases happens overnight. The possible reasons for these symptoms are as follows.

- fungal infection, usually attacking the plant at the base of the stem, and subsequently causing wilt.
- damage to the base of the stem, either by slugs, earwigs or woodlice.
- the plant's own vigour means that the top growth out grows the root system, leaving the roots unable to support the plant, therefore causing it to wilt.

Treatment however for all the above would be as follows:-

1. Cut the affected stalks back to ground level.
2. Drench the ground with a suitable fungicide as a precaution.
3. Feed every six weeks with Vitax Q4 and water up to 5 gallons twice a week.
4. Apply regular fungicidal sprays.

This will encourage new shoots to appear in a couple of months or if wilt has occurred late in the season, re-growth may not occur until the following spring.

To reduce the risk, when planting, plant the clematis 2-3 inches deeper, which will encourage more stems. Also keep the rootball moist with watering and a mulch of chipped bark.

Evergreen and early flowering varieties tend not to be effected by Clematis Wilt.