

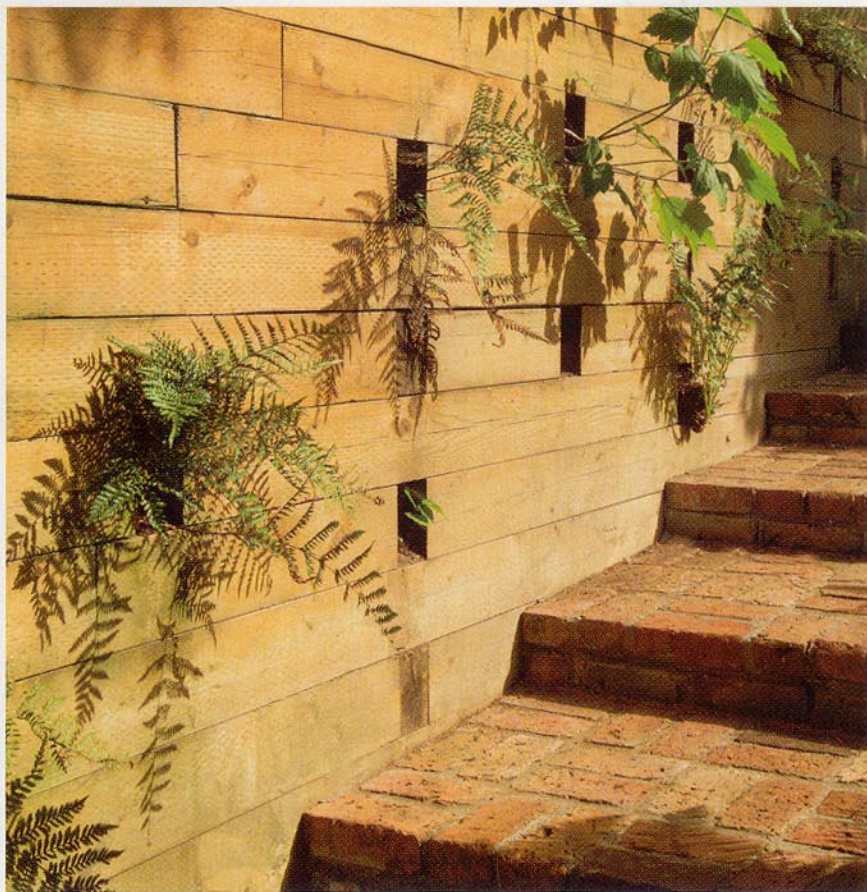


## The very best clematis

In her crisply written book, *Gardening with Clematis* (Timber Press, 2004; \$35), Linda Beutler reveals her point of view in the preface: "For a gardener with an overactive collecting chromosome, there is no better genus with which to become obsessed." Indeed, Beutler grows more than 250 kinds of clematis in her Portland garden, so she speaks with experience. At the end of some chapters, she lists clematis in categories such as 10 favorites for roses, 10 clematis that love shrubs, 10 best for beginners, and so on.

Perhaps the best list is her 10 personal favorites. They include *Clematis* 'Westerplatte' (shown above), a hybrid with large, rich red flowers that is cold-hardy in Sunset climate zones A3, 2b, and milder.

Her other favorites are *C.* 'Allanah' (red flowers), *C. crispa* (small blue-and-white flowers), *C. x durandii* (deep blue), *C.* 'Gipsy Queen' (purple), *C.* 'Louise Rowe' (ice blue), *C. macropetala* 'Mountaindale' (clear blue), *C. texensis* (red), and *C.* 'Venosa Violacea' (white with purple edges). —J.M.



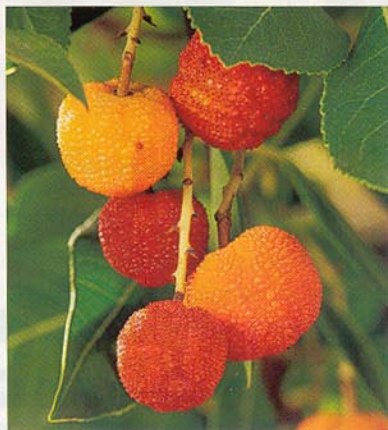
Ferns and a volunteer Japanese anemone (top) extend from drainage portals.

## Holes in a wall

On a steep Seattle lot, this staircase leads from an upper terrace to a

lower garden. To keep the hillside from sloughing off onto the stairs, the owner asked stonemason Ove Gullin to build a retaining wall of 4-by-6 timbers. Between the timbers, Gullin left openings to allow drainage. When landscape designer Jay Ferguson saw the holes in the wall, it occurred to him that they would be perfect planting pockets. Into each hole, he tucked one autumn fern (*Dryopteris erythrosora*). —JIM McCAUSLAND

INFO: Jay Ferguson, Artisan Gardens, Seattle ([www.artisangardens.com](http://www.artisangardens.com) or 206/522-3010)



## Strawberry tree

The common name for *Arbutus unedo* comes from the strawberry-size fruit that bedeck this evergreen during fall and winter. The fruit, which is edible but usually bland in flavor, appears at the same time as small, urn-shaped flowers. The dark green leaves and peeling red-brown bark are also quite handsome.

Related to madrona, *A. unedo* grows well in the coastal Northwest (zones 4-7,

17). Grow it as a small tree (usually 15 to 30 feet) or plant several and leave them unpruned to form a privacy screen. The plant takes full sun or partial shade and tolerates salty ocean breezes, but it doesn't hold up well to icy north winds. It tolerates a wide range of soils but prefers good drainage.

Find container-grown stock at nurseries; plant as soon as you get it home. Named varieties include dwarf 'Elfin King' (5 to 10 feet tall) and 'Oktoberfest' and 'Rubra', both with deep pink flowers. —J.M.