

Hydrangea

Types of Hydrangea

Hydrangeas are the perfect summer flowering plant. They come in a variety of shapes and colors, have attractive foliage and are useful in a wide range of garden sites.



■ Big Leaf Hydrangea

(*Hydrangea macrophylla*)

These are perhaps the most commonly grown hydrangea in the home garden. They can be either mopheads or lacecaps and include familiar varieties such as 'Endless Summer,' Nikki Blue,' 'Pink Lacecap' and many more. Since they produce flowers on the previous season's growth, pruning hard typically results in no flowers. Selectively prune in early spring just before bud break.

Hydrangea macrophylla are the only type of hydrangeas that you can alter the color of.

- For BLUE hydrangea add aluminum sulfate.
- For PINK Hydrangea add lime.
- WHITE hydrangea will always be white.



■ Smooth Leaf Hydrangea

(*Hydrangea arborescens*)

This is a very hardy shrub with an open, spreading habit, making it great for bouquets. One of the most popular is 'Annabelle.' Smooth leaf hydrangea produce flowers on the current season's growth and respond very well to both hard or light pruning. Prune in late winter/early spring before new growth. Tolerates shade very well.



■ Oakleaf Hydrangea

(*Hydrangea quercifolia*)

This hydrangea is well named, as its leaves bear a striking resemblance to oak leaves. The deep green leaves of the oakleaf hydrangea turn shades of deep red in fall before falling off in late fall. The flowers, which are a striking white, are produced on the previous season's growth. Prune right after flowering (mid-summer) to control size and shape. Only remove up to 1/3 of the plant.



■ Panicle Hydrangea

(*Hydrangea paniculata*)

A large, late blooming species of hydrangea. The flower heads are excellent cut, either fresh or dried. Popular varieties include 'Limelight' and 'Tardiva'. Panicle hydrangeas produce flowers on the current season's growth and respond very well to both hard or light pruning. Prune in late winter/early spring before new growth. Tolerates sun well.



■ Climbing Hydrangea

(*Hydrangea anomala petiolaris*)

This hydrangea is in the form of a large, woody vine with dark green heart-shaped foliage. Beginning in June, lacy, flat-topped clusters of white creamy flowers appear in abundance. Climbing hydrangeas grow in full sun or shade but need rich, moist, well-drained soil. They also require a structure such as an arbor, trellis or fence to grow on. Since they produce flowers on the previous season's growth, prune right after flowering (mid-summer) to control size and shape. Only remove up to 1/3 of the plant.



Hydrangea Requirements

■ Sunlight:

Partial shade or filtered light is best, particularly shade from hot afternoon sun. Too much shade leads to weak or no flowers and poor growth. Too much sun without adequate moisture leads to burning/scorching of the leaves and flowers as well as washed out colors.

■ Moisture:

In ideal soil conditions, one inch of water per week in spring and fall and one inch twice a week in summer should be sufficient. AVOID overhead sprinklers! It is best to water the base of the plant to avoid fungus and disease problems. Hydrangeas will signal when they are drought stressed with drooping leaves. Additionally, drooping will occur in extremely warm temperatures (over 85 degrees) regardless of moisture availability.

■ Soil:

Consistently moist, well-drained, preferably acid soils, abundantly enriched with organic moisture is best. Some points to follow:

- Enrich the soil before planting, mulch right after.
- Amend sandy soils by incorporating compost.
- Amend clay soils by breaking up the soil and adding in gypsum and compost.



Fertilization & Soil Amendments:

All hydrangea will benefit from organic, balanced fertilizers. Top dressing the soil with compost and mulch yearly is highly recommended.



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