



Growing Hydrangeas

Cultural Information

Special points of interest:

- Know what kind of soil and water requirements are necessary for beautiful and floriferous hydrangeas.
- Learn how to intensify the flower color of your hydrangeas by adjusting your soil pH and correct fertilizing.
- Learn how proper pruning can increase your flower size on bigleaf hydrangeas
- Pruning your hydrangea species properly can create a more shapely specimen.

Soil:

Hydrangeas will thrive in many soil types. In the wild, they are generally found in woodlands, growing in humus-rich, well drained soils.

Often the color and intensity of the flower will depend on your soil pH. If you have moderately acidic soils (most of the Pacific Northwest), you can make the soil more alkaline by adding 2 cups of lime to the planting hole. To increase the acidity, add a generous amount of peat moss to the soil at planting. If your soil is very acidic (pH below 5.5) or very alkaline (pH above 7.0) it will be difficult to adjust the pH enough to change the color of the flowers. Many of the newer Hydrangea cultivars are not sensitive to pH and have stable flower color.

Water:

Give regular supplemental summer water for the first 2 years after planting, and during dry spells thereafter.

Light:

In the Pacific Northwest, hydrangeas can be grown in full sun or in partial shade. In full sun, they will need more frequent summer watering. Deep shade will decrease flowering.

Fertilizer:

You can aid color intensity by a correct fertilizer program. For best blues, use a nitrate based fertilizer with a NPK ratio of 25-5-30, and include a yearly application of aluminum sulphate. For best pinks and reds, use a nitrate based fertilizer with a NPK ratio of 25-10-10. Or just plant and enjoy!

Pruning Hydrangeas Each Hydrangea species responds differently to pruning.

Pruning can be done in early spring, or just after flowering. Prune according to the groups below:

Hydrangea macrophylla and serrata (Bigleaf Hydrangeas)

These plants bloom mostly on stems produced the previous year. The best pruning method removes old (already flowered) stems to the ground leaving younger stems to flower. If the young stems are multi-branched, thinning them will give you larger flowers.

Hydrangea paniculata and arborescens (Pee Gee Hydrangeas)

These bloom on current year's growth. Prune in early spring to shape or control size, or just remove old flowers above a strong bud.

Hydrangea aspera and quercifolia (Oakleaf)

Prune young plants to create many stems at or near ground level. Older plants; remove old or spent flowers.