

All about Hydrangeas  
Home Gardeners School 2019  
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**Major Species used in and bred with for NJ Landscapes**

Hydrangea anomala subsp. petiolaris	Climbing Hydrangea
Hydrangea arborescens	Smooth Hydrangea
Hydrangea macrophylla	Bigleaf Hydrangea
Hydrangea quercifolia	Oakleaf Hydrangea
Hydrangea paniculata	Panicle Hydrangea
Hydrangea serrata	Mountain Hydrangea, Tea of Heaven
Schizophragma hydrangeoides	Japanese Hydrangea Vine

**Culture and Care**

Hydrangea's grow best in well drained soil that is enriched with organic matter (peatmoss, leafmold or compost). Hydrangea's will grow in full-sun but can also do well in partial shade. Plants growing in full/heavy shade, that provided by structures or evergreen trees may not bloom as prolifically or at all and may be more affected by certain leaf diseases. Hydrangeas generally prefer slightly acidic soils pH 6.0 - 6.5. The color of many H. macrophylla and H. serrata cultivars can be manipulated by adjusting the soil pH. Low pH more blue, high pH more pink. A soil test can determine current pH levels and what needs to be added both nutritionally and to adjust the pH depending on one's needs/desires.

**Purchase and Planting**

Most hydrangeas are purchased as container grown plants 1G, 2G, **3G** 5G 7G. Larger plants can be obtained as B&B grown and very small plants purchased bareroot. When planting container grown plants, the roots need to be loosened when removed from the container, the planting hole should be twice as wide as the width of the roots while the depth should be the same as the height of the roots. Center the plant in the hole and backfill with the amended soil. Apply an organic mulch to keep the weeds down and to conserve moisture. Water the plants at the time of planting and as needed throughout the growing season.

**Pruning Hydrangeas**

H. arborescens and H. paniculata bloom on current season's wood therefore, they can be pruned "hard" in the late winter/early spring of a given year and still bloom beautifully. H. anomala subsp. petiolaris, H. macrophylla, H. quercifolia, H. serrata & Schizophragma hydrangeoides generally bloom on previous year's wood. Delay pruning till early/mid spring to determine what stems are alive. If dead, prune to the ground. Any other pruning should be done for height control or shaping the plant as needed. Many of the new remontant H. macrophylla's bloom more than once per season. Early season flowers are produced from buds that formed the year before. Flowers that come later in the summer come from current season's buds

## **Pest issues**

Hydrangeas are generally carefree disease and insect resistant plants. In areas of poor air circulation and heavy shade certain foliar diseases including Botrytis blight (*Botrytis cinerea*), Cercospora leaf spot (*Cercospora* spp.), and powdery mildew (*Erysiphe polygoni*) may present themselves. These diseases can be reduced through cultural methods and controlled with various chemical options. Hydrangea is also susceptible to root rot caused by the fungus, *Phytophthora nicotianae*. This is most common in production of container grown plants and is only a problem in the landscape on overwatered and poorly drained sites. Sucking insects such as aphids, mites, scales, and plant bugs cause yellowing and distortion of developing leaves.

The major pest of Hydrangeas for most gardeners are deer. Fencing & repellants can be effective controls.

## **Online resources**

<http://www.ag.auburn.edu/landscape/kerrysmith.html>

<https://www.bartlett.com/resources/Hydrangea-Culture-and-Care.pdf>

<http://www.endlesssummerblooms.com/>

<https://www.bhg.com/gardening/trees-shrubs-vines/shrubs/best-hydrangeas/>

<https://www.waysidegardens.com/hydrangea-care-guide/a/324/>

<https://www.almanac.com/plant/hydrangeas>

<https://www.provenwinners.com/Hydrangeas-Demystified>

<https://www.thisoldhouse.com/ideas/5-tips-growing-gorgeous-hydrangeas>