

CARING FOR YOUR HYDRANGEA

Hydrangeas are a beautiful addition to the garden, but they do have some care requirements that need to be met in order to keep them producing flowers that they are known for.

ACIDITY LEVELS

The hydrangeas that produce flowers ranging from pink to blue need special soil conditions to produce the desired flower color. While the hydrangea may have blue flowers on it when you purchase it, that doesn't mean it will continue to produce blue flowers, your soil needs to have higher acidity levels, and for pink flowers to be produced your soil needs to have a lower acidity level. You can have a soil test done and from the results of your test we will be able to determine what needs to be done to help your hydrangeas.

Once you know if your soil acidity needs altering, there are additives that you can add to your soil to achieve the acidity you require. To increase your soil acidity; apply aluminum sulfate to the soil. To lower your soil acidity apply lime to the soil. Apply these additives to your soil in the spring to change the color of the next season's flowers. It takes one season to change the flower color, because the flower buds are set the previous fall.

SUNLIGHT CONDITIONS

Hydrangeas prefer to be in a part sun to full sun locations. If they are in too shady of an area, the plant may stop producing flowers even though the plant itself may still have beautiful, lush foliage. To correct this condition, trim back any surrounding vegetation that is blocking sunlight from the hydrangea or transplant the hydrangea to a location that has filtered sunlight to full sun. If the hydrangea is transplanted to a sunnier location, be sure to alter watering conditions also.

HYDRANGEA PRUNING TIPS

There is often a lot of confusion about when it is the right time to prune a hydrangea. There are so many different varieties now offered at the nursery, it is important to know which variety hydrangea you have. Once you know the variety, by following these guidelines, you should have beautiful flowering hydrangeas complimenting your garden!

There are four species of hydrangea: macrophylla, paniculata, quercifolia and serrata.

MACROPHYLLA- (most new varieties!) Nikko Blue, Merritt's Supreme, Big Daddy, Endless Summer, Hortense, Blaumeise.....

These hydrangeas flower on old wood. The flower buds are formed the previous season. If pruning is needed, prune ***immediately after*** flowering!! If these hydrangeas are pruned in the late fall, winter or early spring, flower buds will be removed. In the spring, if pruning is necessary, the safest way is to conservatively remove some older stems.

PANICULATA- Tardiva, Kyushu, Limelight, Passionate, Pee Gee, Pink Diamond, Unique, Little Lamb, Quick Fire, and Snow Mountain

These hydrangeas flower on new wood. They can be pruned back immediately after flowering or in late fall and early spring. In the spring remove any remaining dead wood after the leaf buds break. These hydrangeas do not necessarily need to be pruned back at all, but on older plants, pruning can result in long stems for fresh and dried flowers.

QUERCIFOLIA- OAKLEAF, ALICE

These hydrangeas flower on old wood. The flower buds are formed the previous season. If pruning is needed, prune ***immediately after*** flowering! If these hydrangeas are pruned in late fall, winter or early spring, flower buds will be removed. In the spring, if pruning is necessary, the safest way is to conservatively remove some older stems.

SERRATA- Bluebird

These hydrangeas can be pruned in fall when they are done flowering-but it is recommended to prune in late winter or early spring for stronger flowering. Prune back the stems to the first pair of large buds. Under limbing is also recommended to encourage upright growth and to keep the plant neater.

