

Hardy Hydrangeas

The hydrangea is an attractive large leaf plant that can be used for foundation plantings, shrub borders or as specimen plants in the garden. If you are looking for a beautiful blooming shrub with flowers that last, this is it. As a bonus, caring for them is very easy. Most only need occasional light pruning.

Hydrangea blooms are made up of clusters of small flowers. The size, color and shape of the flowers vary from variety to variety. Hydrangea blooms contain showy sterile flowers and less conspicuous fertile flowers. They also vary as to season of bloom. As a group, they are all considered resistant to insect and disease problems, although they may have an occasional bout of fungal leaf spot, aphids or scale.

White or Creamy Hydrangea Varieties

Bobo

Hydrangea paniculata 'ILVOBO' This dwarf hydrangea is engulfed by large white flowers in summer. The flowers are held upright on strong stems, and continue to grow and lengthen as they bloom. It forms a rounded shape that will grow 2.5-3 feet tall and spread 3-4 feet. Grows well in part to full sun. 'Bobo' flowers form on new wood and can be pruned in late winter/early spring. Adaptable to many soils and likes with moderate moisture required. Hardy to Zone 3.

Limelight

Hydrangea paniculata 'Limelight' While it is closely related to Pee Gee hydrangea, Limelight is hardy to Zone 4. It differs from Pee Gee by blooming later and having exquisite bright lime-green flowers. It forms a rounded shrub that will grow 6-8 feet tall and 6 feet wide. Be sure to give it plenty of space to grow. Limelight grows well in partial shade to full sun. It is stunning when grown tucked under large, open shade trees where it will provide late summer and early fall bloom. 'Limelight' flowers form on new wood and should be pruned in early spring. It thrives in a well-drained loamy soil and tolerates a wide range of pH.

Little Lime

Hydrangea paniculata 'Jane' a dwarf form of 'Limelight' it has the same great flowers but about a third of the size. Soft lime-green flowers mature to pink and burgundy. It will grow 3-4 feet wide and tall. Does well in part shade to sun. Blooms on new wood. Prune in late winter to early spring. Hardy to Zone 3

Annabelle

Hydrangea arborescens 'Annabelle' Also known as a Snowball hydrangea (or smooth hydrangea), Annabelles have huge, symmetrical blooms in June and July. Hardy to Zone 3, it can grow 4-5 feet tall and 3-5 feet wide. It is probably the showiest hydrangea in the garden with creamy white blooms that are often more than 8 inches across. Annabelle prefers rich, well-drained soil that stays consistently moist. It is tolerant of a wide range of soil pH and does best in partial shade. If it is planted in full sun, be sure to provide adequate moisture or the leaves will droop. Annabelle blooms on new wood and needs to be pruned back to within a foot or two of the ground each spring just as the new buds begin to emerge on the lower stems.

Incrediball

Hydrangea arborescens 'Incrediball' grows 4-5 feet wide and tall. An improvement with giant blooms and has roughly 4 times as many flowers as 'Annabelle'. Cut back in early spring to promote flowering on summer wood. Hardy to Zone 4.

Invincibelle Limetta

Hydrangea arborescens 'NCHAB' Dwarf variety with lush green flowers and very strong stems. Limetta grows 3-4 feet high and wide. Strong rebloomer keeps on blooming until frost. Prune in early spring, just as the new growth begins to emerge on the stems. Remove any dead wood and cut the entire plant back by about one-third its total height. This helps to preserve the strong woody base while also encouraging new growth for the best blooming. A minimum of six hours of sun for the strongest stems and the most abundant flowers. Hardy to Zone 3.

Invincibelle Wee White

Hydrangea arborescens 'NCHA5' This smooth hydrangea has the potential to revolutionize landscaping. It grows only 1-2.5 feet high and wide. Covered in pure white mophead flowers from summer to fall. Pruning is very simple for Invincibelle Wee White hydrangea: just cut the whole plant back by about one-third its total height each spring, just as the new growth begins to appear on the stems. This serves to preserve the woody base while encouraging new growth for maximum blooms. A minimum of six hours of sun for the strongest stems and the most abundant flowers. Hardy to Zone 3

Climbing Hydrangea

Hydrangea anomala subsp. petiolaris Climbing hydrangeas are for the patient, optimistic gardener. They are slow to start, sometimes taking several years to get going. Once the roots are well-established, they are vigorous, vining up stucco, brick, fences or trees with glossy, bright green leaves and creamy white flowers in June and July. Climbing hydrangeas require rich, well-drained soil and do well in partial shade. They will eventually grow 15-25 feet in length and require winter protection of the root system (a foot of straw, leaves or hay). Climbing Hydrangea blooms on old wood so it needs to be pruned right after blooming in the fall.

Non-White Hydrangea Varieties

Endless Summer

Hydrangea macrophylla 'Bailmer' Endless Summer blooms on both old and new wood. The flowers are pink in alkaline soils, and blue in acid soils. In our climate, Endless Summer will grow to 3'-5' high and wide. Blooms should show by late July. Some winter protection is a good idea; light pruning in early spring to shape the plant may remove some buds, but the plant will bloom on new wood.

Endless Summer Twist-n-Shout

Hydrangea macrophylla 'PIIHM-I' Twist-n-Shout grows 3-4 feet wide and tall. It has lacey deep-pink centers surrounded by gorgeous blossoms of pink. Will blossom periwinkle blue in acid soils. Twist-n-Shout does best in an eastern exposure with protection from afternoon sun. Light pruning in early spring. It blooms on both old and new wood. Hardy to Zone 4.

Endless Summer BloomStruck

Hydrangea arborescens 'PIIHA-II' BloomStruck grows 3-4 feet wide and tall. This beauty blooms on old and new growth with perfectly rounded flowers averaging 3-5 inches across. Flowers are rose-pink, or violet-blue in acidic soil. Does well in partial shade. Prune in late winter or early spring. Hardy to zone 4.

Invincibelle Mini Mauvette

Hydrangea arborescens 'NCHA7' aA never-before-seen color in a deep mauve-violet. Blooms on strong stems summer through fall. Mini Mauvette grows 2.5-3 feet high and wide. Prune in early spring, just as the new growth begins to emerge on the stems. Remove any dead wood and cut the entire plant back by about one-third its total height. This helps to preserve the strong woody base while also encouraging new growth for the best blooming. A minimum of six hours of sun for the strongest stems and the most abundant flowers. Hardy to Zone 3.

Invincibelle Ruby

Hydrangea arborescens Invincibelle Ruby grows 3-4 feet tall and 2-3 feet wide. Prune in early spring, just as the new growth begins to emerge on the stems. Remove any dead wood and cut the entire plant back by about one-third its total height. Can be grown in full sun. Hardy to Zone 3.

Quick Fire

Hydrangea paniculata 'Bulk' A new early blooming paniculata hydrangea with conical flowers similar to 'Tardiva' this plant's flowers emerge white, then quickly mature to a rich deep pink. The plant grows 6 to 8 feet tall and 4 to 6 feet wide. Quick Fire blooms on new wood so prune in early spring. Hardy to Zone 3.

Little Quick Fire

Hydrangea paniculata 'SMHPLQF' Early blooming about a month before other hydrangeas. White flowers transform to pink-red. Little Quick Fire grows 3-5 feet and 4-7 feet wide. It blooms on new wood. Prune in late winter or early spring. Does well in sun to part sun. Hardy to Zone 3.

Vanilla Strawberry

Hydrangea paniculata 'Renhy' Vanilla Strawberry grows 6-7 feet tall and 4-5 feet wide. Enormous flowers panicles are a blend of vanilla and strawberry, held upright on red stems. Flowers emerge white in mid summer, change to pink and finally to strawberry red. Flowers on new wood, prune in early spring. Hardy to Zone 4.

Strawberry Sundae

Hydrangea paniculata 'Rensun' Strawberry Sundae grows 4-5 feet wide and 3-4 feet wide. It is similar to Vanilla Strawberry, but is smaller in stature. Does well in part shade to sun. Flowers change from creamy white to pink and finally strawberry red. Flowers on new wood, prune in late winter to early spring. Hardy to Zone 4.

Oregon Pride

Hydrangea macrophylla 'Oregon Pride' Dark purple-red stems with red to purplish flowers. It grows 3-5 feet tall and 3-5 feet wide. Blooms on old wood. Prune back to new growth in spring. These hydrangeas need to be protected in winter with a heavy layer of mulch. At least a five gallon pail per plant. They over winter quite easily if protected and brought into an unheated garage. Hardy to Zone 5.

Next Generation Red Sensation

Hydrangea macrophylla 'Red Sensation' Stunning rebloomer with red mophead flower clusters. Next Gen grows 2-3 feet tall and 3-5 feet wide. Grows best in filtered sun. Prune in late winter or early spring as they bloom on old and new wood. They will need to be protected in winter with a heavy layer of mulch. Hardy to Zone 5.

Blue Enchantress

Hydrangea macrophylla 'Monmar' Striking ruby-black stems support large mophead flowers on this exquisite reblooming hydrangea. Grows 3-5 feet tall and wide. Likes partial shade to partial sun. Blue in acidic soils and pink in more alkaline soils. Can be lightly trimmed in early spring. Blooms on new and old wood. Some winter protection is a good idea.

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