

ALL ABOUT HYDRANGEAS

If you are looking for a show stopping garden flower to plant in your garden, hydrangea flowers are truly stunning. Large globes of flowers cover this shrub in the spring and summer. Although they look high maintenance, with the right care and growing conditions, hydrangeas are for the most part are easy to grow.

BIGLEAF HYDRANGEA (*Hydrangea macrophylla*)

Hydrangea macrophylla, commonly referred to as bigleaf hydrangea, is one of the most popular landscape shrubs owing to its large mophead flowers. Bigleaf hydrangeas feature a rounded habit, large bold leaves, and attractive clusters of long-blooming summer flowers. Examples of Bigleaf Hydrangeas include Endless Summer, Blushing Bride, Bloom Struck, or Summer Crush. Bigleaf hydrangeas are divided into two groups: the Mophead Hydrangeas and the Lacecap Hydrangeas.

- Mophead Hydrangeas produce large, rounded flower heads that are mostly packed with showy sterile florets. Since Mophead flowers cannot be pollinated, they will bloom continuously throughout the summer, until fall approaches and they change color. The color changes can be quite amazing with rich blues turning wine-red, or whites changing to pale green and even blood-red.
- Lacecap Hydrangeas produce flattened flower clusters composed of beautiful sterile florets that radiate around a central cluster of tiny florets. Since the florets are generally pollinated, the lacecap flowers will fade in color much faster than a mophead, remaining beautiful for about a month.

MOUNTAIN HYDRANGEA (*Hydrangea serrata*)

Mountain hydrangeas are the least common mophead (*macrophylla*). Mountain hydrangeas are typically smaller and more compact than other mophead hydrangeas. The leaves are dark green and serrated like other *macrophylla*. Mountain hydrangeas prefer morning sun/afternoon shade and offer beautiful colors in the blue, purple, pink, and white families. Mountain hydrangeas colors can also be changed based on the PH level of the soil. Examples of Mountain hydrangeas include Tuff Stuff, Tiny Tuff Stuff, Tuff Stuff Red, Wee Bit Giddy, and Wee Bit Grumpy.

SMOOTH HYDRANGEA (*Hydrangea arborescens*)

Smooth hydrangeas are native to the Eastern United States. Smooth Hydrangeas are well known for their creamy white flower clusters. Blooming consistently from early summer to fall, the distinctly domed to nearly rounded blossoms open lime-green, then change to a brilliant creamy white before changing over to a tan shade for the fall. Additionally, their foliage consists of broad egg-shaped, sharply toothed, dark green leaves that warm up to buttery yellow shades in the fall extending its season of interest. Smooth hydrangeas colors cannot be changed with the PH of the soil. Examples of Smooth hydrangeas include Annabelle, Incrediball, Incrediball Blush, Invencibelle Limette, and Invincibelle Wee White.

PANICLE HYDRANGEA (*Hydrangea paniculata*)

Also known as peegee hydrangeas, hardy hydrangeas, or Limelight hydrangeas, Panicle hydrangeas are the easiest to grow and one of the most adaptable of all hydrangeas making them perfect for enthusiast and novices alike. Panicle hydrangeas are special because they are hardy clear to zone 3, they look their best in the Autumn when the rest of your garden starts to die out, they adapt to full sun or part-shade, they are great for cuttings, and they attract butterflies. Most varieties large clusters of white flowers in the summer that fade to shades of pink or red before drying out to a beige color. Examples of Panicle hydrangeas include Bobo, Limelight, Little Lime, Vanilla Strawberry, Quick Fire, and Fire Light Tidbit.

OAKLEAF HYDRANGEA (*Hydrangea petiolaris*)

Oakleaf hydrangeas are easily identified because their foliage resembles the leaves of an oak tree. Unlike mophead hydrangeas, Oakleaf hydrangeas are tough, cold hardy, and more drought resistant. Oakleaf hydrangeas are attractive all year long with greenish white flowers that start blooming early spring and then they pick up subtle shades of pink and brown as they age and during the fall months the foliage turns from green into bright shades of red and orange. Examples of Oakleaf hydrangeas include Alice, Gatsby, Jetstream, or Ruby Slippers.

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