

Hydrangeas

A Garden Guide

The genus *Hydrangea* contains a wide variety of species and cultivars (50+). Most are introduced, although a few species are native.



Hydrangea anomala (Climbing Hydrangea): Great for growing on rock walls or other structures. Also can be used as a ground cover. Prefers shade and is slow growing. Is attractive in all seasons with peeling bark, bright green leaves, and white fragrant flowers.

Hydrangea arborescens (Smooth Hydrangea): **NC Native**. Does best in part shade and is very effective in mass plantings. Prune to the ground in later winter and will flower in June/July. Sometimes will get a second flowering in September by pruning after the summer flowering. ‘**Annabelle**’ is a popular cultivar.

Hydrangea macrophylla (Bigleaf Hydrangea): This species contains many cultivars. Some bloom blue or pink depending upon soil pH. Hortensias (mophead) and lacecaps are the two flower types. This is a very popular group of hydrangeas and new cultivars are being produced (‘**Endless Summer**’ and ‘**Lady in Red**’) are two of the newest. Plant in part shade or full sun if the soil is excellent. Prune just after flowering as they bloom on old wood. The buds are sometimes winter killed here. However, there are new reblooming varieties for those frustrated by ‘winter kill’ that bloom from spring to fall.

Hydrangea paniculata (Panicle Hydrangea): Large panicle type, blooms (cone shaped inflorescences) in summer and is good for drying. Toughest of all the hydrangeas. Does well in full sun or part shade. Can be pruned in late winter / early spring as it blooms on new wood. ‘**PeeGee**’ is an old cultivar. Newer ones are ‘**Pink Diamond**’, ‘**Tardiva**’, ‘**Limelight**’, and ‘**Little Lime**’.

Hydrangea quercifolia (Oakleaf Hydrangea): **NC Native**. Prefers part shade or sun if excellent soil with ample moisture. Prune after flowering. Nice in all seasons with peeling bark, large leaves with good fall color, and showy flower panicles up to 12” in length. ‘**Snow Queen**’, ‘**Snowflake**’, ‘**PeeWee**’, and ‘**Sikes Dwarf**’ are a few cultivars.

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