

PERENNIAL CARE

hydrangea 101

With elegant blooms and a timeless appearance, hydrangeas are an iconic garden staple perfect in any garden space. Hydrangea are most commonly available as cultivars of three main species: *Hydrangea macrophylla* (Bigleaf Hydrangea), *Hydrangea paniculata* (Panicle Hydrangea), and *Hydrangea arborescens* (Smooth Hydrangea).

***Hydrangea macrophylla*, Bigleaf Hydrangea**

Hydrangea macrophylla are compact hydrangeas best suited for part-shade. Their colorful, spherical or lacecap blooms surprise and delight. Color-changing cultivars, including the Endless Summer® series, will express blue or pink blooms depending on soil pH. Garden amendments can further influence bloom color in these cultivars. Blooms turn bluer in color with the addition of a soil acidifier, and pinker in color with the addition of garden lime to increase soil alkalinity.

Modern bigleaf hydrangea cultivars flower on new and old growth, so pruning can be done anytime but is usually best performed in the spring. Extensive pruning beyond basic shaping and removing broken or damaged branches is not usually necessary. Fertilize two or three times per season between mid-May and mid-July with a bloom-focused fertilizer. Make sure to avoid nitrogen-heavy fertilizers.

***Hydrangea paniculata*, Panicle Hydrangea**

Hydrangea paniculata are part to full-sun varieties with long-lasting, large, conical or lacecap panicles borne on new wood (the current season's growth). Prune panicle hydrangea by 30-50% in the late winter or early spring before they begin to leaf out. Fertilize two or three times per season between mid-May and mid-July with an acidic fertilizer such as Miracle Gro Miracid, or a bloom-focused fertilizer such as Espoma Flower Tone or Miracle Gro Bloom Booster.

***Hydrangea arborescens*, Smooth Hydrangea**

Hydrangea arborescens are part to full shade, moderately sized shrubs with large spherical flowers that bloom only on new wood. Prune smooth hydrangea back in late winter or early spring to a height of one to two feet above ground. This will encourage abundant new growth. Fertilize two or three times per season between mid-May and mid-July with an acidic or bloom-focused fertilizer.

***Hydrangea macrophylla* varieties we love:**

Blue Enchantress®
Endless Summer® 'BloomStruck®'
Endless Summer® 'Eclipse®'
Endless Summer® 'Pop Star®'
Endless Summer® 'Summer Crush®'
Seaside Serenade® 'Cape Lookout'
Seaside Serenade® 'Cape May'
Seaside Serenade® 'Hamptons'
Seaside Serenade® 'Martha's Vineyard'
Seaside Serenade® 'Crystal Cove'

***Hydrangea paniculata* varieties we love:**

'Berry White'
'Bobo®'
'Diamond Rouge®'
'Early Evolution™'
'Fire Light®'
'Fire Light Tidbit®'
'Little Hottie®'
'Limelight'
'Limelight Prime®'
'Little Lime®'
'Little Quick Fire®'
'Pinky Winky®'
'Quick Fire®'
'Little Quick Fire®'
'Strawberry Shake™'

***Hydrangea arborescens* varieties we love:**

'Annabelle'
'Incrediball®'
Invincibelle® 'Garnetta®'
Invincibelle® 'Mini Mauvette®'
Seaside Serenade® 'Bar Harbor'



Check out our guide to planting trees and shrubs before getting started!