Hydrangeas

Hydrangeas are among the easiest shrubs to grow in the Pacific Northwest garden. They are hardy to 0° F (or lower) and like full sun to partial shade and humus-rich soil. Fertilize in spring with a standard rose and flower fertilizer such as E. B. Stone or Espoma. Keep them well-watered during our summer dry season for best flower production.

The most common hydrangea species are *Hydrangea macrophylla, H. arborescens, H. paniculata, H. quercifolia,* and *H. serrata. H. macrophylla,* the big-leaf hydrangea, is the classical blue, pink, or white mophead or lacecap hydrangea. If you just say hydrangea, you're probably thinking of this one. It usually grows as a large, rounded shrub and produces one prolonged flush of flowers in midsummer. Dwarf and reblooming forms are now available. *H. serrata* is its slightly smaller lacecap cousin.

Soil pH (acidity or alkalinity) determines the flower color and intensity for many of the *Hydrangea macrophylla* and *serrata* varieties. Sky's hydrangea list specifies the color changes to be expected for each cultivar, as do our plant tags. Our Northwest winter rains tend to turn soils more acidic over time, so flower color can change after planting. Acid soil tends to turn flowers blue or to intensify blue shades. Aluminum sulfate can be used to acidify the soil at a rate of 4 oz. (1/2 cup) per square yard. Water in well after applying. Liming tends to make soil more alkaline, which makes flowers pinker. Potassium nitrate is recommended to intensify pink and red shades; use 1 teaspoon per foot of plant height.

The other species do not change color according to soil pH. Smooth hydrangea (*H. arborescens)* produces dome-shaped clusters of white flowers on an upright shrub; green and pink forms are now available. It is the most cold-hardy. Panicle/peegee hydrangea (*H. paniculata)* typically grows as a large, spreading shrub with panicles (long cone-shaped clusters) of flowers that are commonly green, white, or buff, often aging to pink or red. Many varieties now offer bicolor or tricolor blooms. Flowers typically last into fall. *H. quercifolia,* the oakleaf hydrangea, is characterized by its rounded form, large oak-shaped leaves and excellent bronze to red-purple fall foliage color. It requires better drainage than other varieties. Its panicle flowers are typically white, often aging to pink. Sky also sometimes carries white-flowering deciduous or evergreen climbing hydrangeas.

Prune shrubby hydrangeas in late winter or early spring. Prune out dead branches and deadhead (cut off spent flowers). Every third year or so, completely remove some of the oldest branches. **For bigleaf, serrata, and oakleaf varieties, be sure to cut back to just ABOVE a pair of plump buds**: those are next year's flowers, and you don't want to remove them! Smooth and panicle hydrangeas can be pruned harder. Climbing hydrangeas need only be pruned to remove spent flowers or to shape them. **The size of most shrubby hydrangeas cannot be managed by pruning; if your hydrangea is too big, you may need to relocate it and select a smaller cultivar.**

CULTIVAR NAME	COLOR AS A PINK	COLOR AS A BLUE	DESCRIPTION/ NOTES	PLANT HEIGHT
H. MACROPHYLLA (MOPHEAD & LACECAP TYPES)				
Akadama	Deep pink		Mophead	4-5’
Blue Wave	Mauve to pink	Lilac to dark blue	Lacecap; 6-8”	4-5’
Centennial Ruby	Ruby red aging blackened red		**Repeat bloomer;** mophead	3-4’
Eclipse (dark purple foliage)	Cranberry red	Deep purple	**Repeat bloomer;** mophead	3-5’
Elizabeth Ashley	Rich pink with green eye	Blue purple w/ green eye	Mophead; large	3-4’
Endless Summer	Deep pink	Deep blue	**Repeat bloomer;** mophead	3-5’
(Endless Summer) Bloomstruck	Rose pink	Violet to dark blue	**Repeat bloomer;** mophead	3-5’
(Endless Summer) Blushing Bride	White aging to pale pink	White aging to pale blue	**Repeat bloomer;** mophead	3-6’
(Endless Summer) Dream Cloud	White, sometimes aging pink		**Repeat bloomer;** mophead	3-4’
(Endless Summer) Pop Star	Deep rich pink	Blue to violet edged paler	**Repeat bloomer,** lacecap	18-36”
(Endless Summer) Summer Crush	Raspberry red	Deep periwinkle	**Repeat bloomer;** mophead	18-36”
(Endless Summer) Twist-n-Shout	Deep pink edged paler	Blue edged pink	**Repeat bloomer,** lacecap	3-5’
Glowing Embers	Glowing red	Purple	6-8” mophead	4-10’
Grin and Tonic	Lime green to creamy to white		**Repeat bloomer;** mophead	3’
Hi™ White Sun	White		**Repeat bloomer;** mophead	3-5’ X 5-6’ wide
Inspire	Pink; starry double florets		Mophead	4’
Lanarth White	White edged pale pink	White edged pale blue	Lacecap; 6-8”	4-6’
Let’s Dance ¡Arriba!	Vivid deep pink	Rich violet-purple	**Repeat bloomer;** mophead	24-36”
Let’s Dance Can Do (Blooms along branches, not just tip; very floriferous)	Strawberry pink	Lavender	**Repeat bloomer;** lacecap	3-4’
Let’s Dance Sky View	Medium Pink	Periwinkle blue to violet	**Repeat bloomer;** mophead	24-36”

CULTIVAR NAME	COLOR AS A PINK	COLOR AS A BLUE	DESCRIPTION/ NOTES	PLANT HEIGHT
Magical (or Everlasting) Amethyst	Pink edged green, ages lime	Violet edged green; ages lime	**Repeat bloomer;** mophead	3-4’
Magical (or Everlasting) Revolution	Multiple colors at once—pink, blue, and purple aging to green		**Repeat bloomer;** mophead	3-4’
Nikko Blue	Light pink	Medium blue	8-10” mophead	4-6’
Pistachio (Next Generation)	Red edged green with blue & white eye		**Repeat bloomer;** mophead	2-3’
Princess Diana AKA Wow Time	Pink to Salmon	Violet-blue	Mophead; double starry flowers	3-4’
Seaside Serenade Cape Cod	Pink w/white eye	Blue to violet w/white eye	**Repeat bloomer;** mophead	3-4’
Seaside Serenade Cape Lookout	Pale green; turns pure white, then white tinted pink		**Repeat bloomer;** mophead	3-4’
Seaside Serenade Cape May	Deep pink	Blue	**Repeat bloomer;** lacecap, large	3-4’
Seaside Serenade Crystal Cove	White edged deep pink	White edged purple-blue	**Repeat bloomer**; lacecap	3-4’
Seaside Serenade Hamptons	Rich pink with darker pink edge		**Repeat bloomer;** mophead	3-4’
Seaside Serenade Martha’s Vineyard	Vibrant pink-red		**Repeat bloomer;** mophead	3-4’
Seaside Serenade Newport	Deep pink	Blue-violet	**Repeat bloomer;** mophead	3-4’
Seaside Serenade Outer Banks	Mid pink	Mid blue	**Repeat bloomer**; lacecap	4’
Seaside Serenade Pebble Beach	Raspberry purple	Electric blue to purple	**Repeat bloomer;** mophead	3-4’
Spike	Strong pink	Sky blue to purple	**Mophead;** very ruffled flowers	5’
Star Gazer (Double Delights)	Pink edged white	Blue edged white	**Repeat bloomer**; lacecap, double	4’
Tilt-a-Swirl	Changes from pure green to pink-edged to rich red		Mophead; very long bloom time	3-4’
Tinkerbell AKA Rosy Splendor	Rosy pink	Blue	Mophead; triple “starry” florets	3-4’
Wedding Gown (AKA Dancing Snow)	Double white lacecap flowers		**Repeat bloomer,** lacecap	2-3’
Wee Bit Giddy	Rich pink-red w/white eye	Magenta to violet w/eye	**Repeat bloomer,** 6-8” mophead	2-3’

OTHER HYDRANGEA SPECIES			
SPECIES/ CULTIVAR NAME	**FLOWER COLOR/DESCRIPTION**	**NOTES**	**HEIGHT**
H. HYBRID (CASCADE HYDRANGEA) – grows horizontally, with flowers all along the branches			
H. XXX Fairytrail Bride	White, lacecap	Great for containers; flowers at every node	4' X 4'
H. ANGUSTIPETALA (NARROW LEAF OR 'GOLDEN CRANE' HYDRANGEA) – lacecap type			
H. angustipetala	White & chartreuse, **scented**	Lacecap; very early	3-5'
H. ARBORESCENS (SMOOTH HYDRANGEA) – mophead type			
H. arborescens 'Annabelle'	White; 10-12" ball	Long-blooming	5-6'
H. arborescens Seaside Serenade 'Bar Harbor'	White;10-12" ball	Long-blooming	4'
H. arborescens 'Green Dragon'	6-8", pale green edged white; bees love	L**acecap**	4-5'
H. arborescens 'Incrediball'	White: 12" ball		4-5'
H. arborescens 'FlowerFull'	White, 10" dome; very floriferous	Strong stems	4-5'
H. arborescens 'Invincibelle Ruby'	Burgundy buds open to silvery pink flowers edged with ruby	**Repeat bloomer**	3-4'
H. arborescens 'Invincibelle Wee White'	Blush pink flowers age pure white	**Repeat bloomer**	12-30"
H. arborescens 'Lime Rickey'	Pale jade green dome; very floriferous	Strong stems	4-5'
H. ASPERA (ROUGH-LEAF HYDRANGEA) – large fuzzy leaves, lacecap type			
H. aspera 'Spinners'	Lilac edged pale lilac, aging to purple edged mauve	Lacecap	6-8'
H. aspera 'Villosa'	Blue-violet edged pink	Lacecap	6-8'

H. PANICULATA (PEEGEE or PANICLE HYDRANGEA)			
H. paniculata 'Angel's Blush'	White aging red	Long panicles	8-12'
H. paniculata 'Berry White'	White aging to raspberry red	Rounded panicles	6-7'
H. paniculata 'Bobo'	Creamy white aging to pink		3'
H. paniculata 'Diamond Rouge'	White aging to pink then wine red		4-5'
H. paniculata 'Fire and Ice'	Creamy white aging to red	Red stems	6-10'
H. paniculata 'Fire Light'	White aging to rich pink-red	Longest blooming	5-6'
H. paniculata 'Fire Light Tidbit'	Pale green aging to white, then pink, then rich red	Longest blooming, into October	2-3'
H. paniculata 'French Manicure'	Opens white, blushes pink from base giving two-tone effect		4-5'
H. paniculata 'Limelight'	Lime aging to white then pink		6-8'
H. paniculata 'Limelight Prime'	Lime green aging to white, then raspberry pink	Blooms earlier than 'Limelight'	4-6'
H. paniculata 'Little Hottie'	Snow white aging pink	Tolerates heat	3-5'
H. paniculata 'Little Lime'	Lime aging to white then pink	Rounded panicles	3-5'
H. paniculata 'Little Quick Fire'	White aging to deep pink-red	Early blooming	3-5'
H. paniculata 'Mojito'	Lime green aging blush pink	Rounded panicles	3-4'
H. paniculata 'Pinky Winky'	White blushing pink from base		6-8'
H. paniculata 'Quick Fire'	White aging to deep pink-red	Early blooming	6-8'
H. paniculata 'Spring Sizzle'	White aging to warm deep red	Very early blooming	4-6'
H. paniculata 'Strawberry Sundae'	Cream turning to pink, then strawberry; all colors at once	Dwarf version of Vanilla Strawberry	4-5'
H. paniculata 'Tiny Quick Fire'	White aging to deep pink-red	Very early, very small	18-36"
H. paniculata 'Vanilla Strawberry'	Cream turning to pink, then strawberry; all colors at once		6-8'

SPECIES/ CULTIVAR NAME	FLOWER COLOR/DESCRIPTION		NOTES	HEIGHT
H. QUERCIFOLIA (OAKLEAF HYDRANGEA)- noted for colorful fall foliage				
H. quercifolia 'Munchkin'	White aging pink		Upright flowers	3'
H. quercifolia 'Pee Wee'	White			3-4'
H. quercifolia 'Ruby Slippers'	White aging deep pink		Very large flowers	3-4'
H. quercifolia 'Snow Queen'	White aging pink			4-6'
H. quercifolia 'Toy Soldier'	White and green			4-5'
H. SERRATA (MOUNTAIN HYDRANGEAS)- LACECAP FLOWERS				
H. serrata Beni Gaku	Bright Pink	Rosy Violet	4" flowers	3-4'
H. serrata Blue Bird	Medium pink	Deep blue	4" flowers	4-5'
Preziosa (H. serrata)	White to pale pink w/rose edges		4" flowers	4-5'
'Tuff Stuff' (H. serrata)	Reddish pink	Lavender blue	**Repeat bloomer**	2-3'
CLIMBING HYDRANGEAS				
H. anomala petiolaris (Climbing Hydrangea)	White, flat, 6-7" lacecap flowers		Deciduous foliage	To 20'
H. anomala petiolaris 'Miranda'	White, flat, 6-7" lacecap flowers		Yellow-edged deciduous foliage	10-12'
H. integrifolia (Evergreen Climbing Hydrangea)	White lacecap flowers		Glossy green foliage	12-15'