

# Hydrangea: Which One is Right for Me?

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- Your growing conditions should drive your decision making about which hydrangea species and cultivar will work best. Essential information: sun exposure, available space, soil conditions, pruning requirements, color.
- Hydrangea do well in New England zones 5-7. Most will do well in zones 4-8, depending on winter care.
- They are not deer resistant. Most are rabbit resistant. Most are low maintenance.

Species	Sun	HxW	Colors	Shape	Bloom Size*	Bloom Time	Flowers on
<b>H. anomala</b> <i>Climbing H.</i> ***	Part sun to full shade	3-5'	Mostly white, some pink	Lacecap	6-8+"	May-June	Old and new wood
<b>H. arborescens +</b> <i>Smooth-leaf H.</i>	Full sun to part shade	3-6'	White, light green, pink	Mophead Lacecap	6-8+"	June-Sept	New wood 100% bloom guarantee
<b>H. aspera *; **</b> <i>Rough-leaf H.</i>	Part sun	5-10'	White, mauve, lavender	Lacecap	3-8+"	June-Oct	Old wood
<b>H. involucrate*</b>	Full sun to part shade	5-6'	White, pink, purple	Lacecap	3-6"	Aug – Oct	Old wood
<b>H. macrophylla *; **; ***; some ****</b> <i>Bigleaf H.</i>	Part sun to full shade	6-10'	White, pink, blue, purple, red	Mophead & Lacecap	3-8+"	May-Sept	Old wood on most; old and new wood on rebloomers only
<b>H. paniculata *; ***</b> <i>Panicle H.</i>	Full sun	4-10'	White goes to pink then red	Elongated panicles	8+"	July-Oct	New wood; 100% bloom guarantee
<b>H. quercifolia +; *; ***</b> <i>Oakleaf H.</i>	Full sun to part shade	6-10'	White, Red	Elongated panicles	3-8+"	June-Oct	Old wood
<b>H. serrata **; ***</b> <i>Mountain H.</i>	Part sun	3-6'	Pink, blue	Lacecap	3-6"	June-Oct	Old wood

\* Size of shrub and bloom depends on cultivar; \*\* pH may affect bloom color; \*\*\* good fall color; \*\*\*\* reblooming; + native to N. America

Species	Garden Uses	Pruning Practices *
<b>H. anomala</b>	Needs a structure to grown on – walls, fences, large trees; will grow as mounding shrub without structure and have fewer flowers. Least ornamental	Only to control growth and shape. Pruning does not impact flowers. Prune to prevent growth along the ground.
<b>H. arborescens</b>	Mixed borders, woodland gardens, background for perennial beds. Mass plantings in part shade areas to create summer screen. Proven Winners© 'Invincebelle' and 'Incrediball' series	Cut stems to 6" and late winter for fewer, but larger blooms. Cut to 18" for more, but smaller blooms. Pruning promotes vigorous new stems.
<b>H. aspera **</b>	Mixed borders, woodland gardens, background for perennial beds.	Prune after flowering ¼" above healthy nodes. Remove all dead stems and branches in spring after the plant has shown growth to avoid cutting productive canes
<b>H. involucrata</b>	Mixed borders in sunny to part shade locations; understory plantings, specimens.	
<b>H. macrophylla **</b>	Shrub or mixed border; some cultivars are good specimen or accent plants; foundations, patios, pools, hedges; containers- must be put in ground to overwinter.	
<b>H. serrata **</b>	Group or mass in sheltered location; shrub border; specimen or accent near homes or patios.	

<b>H. paniculata</b>	Mass planting; mixed border, woodland garden; lawn specimen, accent or hedge. Late summer blooms when few other shrubs are flowering.	Can be trained through pruning to tree form. Prune in late winter to control growth: Cut stems to 6" and late winter for fewer, but larger blooms. Cut to 18" for more, but smaller blooms.
<b>H. quercifolia</b>	Specimen or accent for foundations, patios, pools; group or mass in shrub border; woodland; good hedge; exfoliating branches provide winter interest.	Prune in late winter/early spring for winter damage and shape. Otherwise, only needs to be pruned to control size and shape.

\* Best to remove flowerheads prior to winter, as wind and snow can break canes, especially important for hydrangea that flower on old wood. Flowers form on last year's growth and must go dormant in winter. However, if dormancy breaks in late February followed by late killing frost in March, the blooms may be killed. Nothing can be done about this.

\*\* Hydrangea color is impacted by soil pH. Blue in acidic and pink in alkaline. Add aluminum sulfate in late autumn or early spring to make flowers bluer or lime to make them pinker. This may take several growing seasons to achieve the desired color effect. A naturally white or green flower cannot be changed to pink or blue.

**Reblooming H. macrophylla:** Flowers grow on both old and new wood. These are sold as the trademarked Endless Summer series with cultivars: 'The Original' - blue mophead; 'Blushing Bride' - white mophead; 'Twist-n-Shout' -pink or periwinkle lacecap; 'Bloomstruck' - purple or rose pink mophead; 'Summer Crush'- raspberry red or neon purple mophead.

**Reblooming H. serrata:** The Proven Winner 'Tuff Stuff' series comes with pink, blue, or purple lacecap. On all reblooming plants, deadhead the spent flowers during the growing season to encourage new growth. However, prune as you would H. macrophylla.

#### Websites & Gardens for Getting Ideas:

- Endless Summer rebloomers at [www.endlesssummerblooms.com](http://www.endlesssummerblooms.com)
- Hydrangea basics at [www.gardendesign.com/hydrangea/](http://www.gardendesign.com/hydrangea/)
- Hydrangea Plus in Oregon and at [www.hydrangeaplus.com](http://www.hydrangeaplus.com) has a wide array of mail-order hydrangea
- Missouri Botanical Garden plant finder at <https://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/plantfinder/plantfindersearch.aspx>
- Proven Winners Cityline series of dwarf H. macrophylla: [www.provenwinners.com](http://www.provenwinners.com) and type in the species or cultivar name in the search engine
- Unusual hydrangea can be found at Broken Arrow Nursery in Hamden, Connecticut at [www.brokenarrownursery.com](http://www.brokenarrownursery.com)
- Heritage Museums and Gardens in Sandwich at <http://heritagemuseumsandgardens.org> has the hydrangea demonstration and test garden

#### Soil Test Information:

- University of Massachusetts Amherst soil test lab: <https://ag.umass.edu/services/soil-plant-nutrient-testing-laboratory/ordering-information-forms>
- University of Connecticut soil test lab: <https://soiltest.uconn.edu/sampling.php>

#### Glossary of Terms

- **Bract:** A modified leaf associated with a flower or inflorescence and differing in shape, size, or color from other leaves.
- **Inflorescence:** Several flowers closely grouped together to form an efficient structured unit; the grouping or arrangement of flowers on a plant.
- **Node:** The part of a stem from which leaves or branches arise.
- **Sepal:** In a flower, one of the segments or divisions of the outer whorl of non-fertile parts surrounding the fertile organs; usually green.