

*hydrangea*

## HYDRANGEA CARE GUIDE

What type of Hydrangea do I have?

**Bigleaf (*H. macrophylla*)**



Light: Morning Sun / Afternoon Shade  
Pruning: Old Wood - Prune after blooming  
Color: Blue, Purple, Pink, White  
Most can be changed based on pH

**Smooth (*H. arborescens*)**



Light: Part Shade to Sun  
Pruning: New Wood - prune late winter  
Color: White or Pink  
Color cannot be changed based on pH

**Mountain (*H. serrata*)**



Light: Morning Sun / Afternoon Shade  
Pruning: Old Wood - Prune after blooming  
Color: Blue, Purple, Pink, White  
Most can be changed based on pH

**Panicle (*H. paniculata*)**



Light: Full Sun to Part Shade  
Pruning: New Wood - Prune late winter  
Color: White blooms, may fade to pink  
Color cannot be changed based on pH

## hydrangea

### Oakleaf (*H. quercifolia*)



Light: Full Sun to Part Shade  
Pruning: Old Wood - Prune after blooming  
Color: White blooms, may fade to pink  
Color cannot be changed based on pH

### Climbing (*H. petiolaris*)



Light: Morning Sun / Afternoon Shade  
Pruning: Old Wood - Prune after blooming  
Color: White  
Color cannot be changed based on pH

## Why isn't my Hydrangea blooming?

**Time:** Hydrangea can take anywhere from 2 to 5 years before they are mature enough to produce blooms.

**Light:** Most Hydrangea require at least 4 to 6 hours of sunlight per day to produce blooms.

**Pruning:** They may have been pruned at the wrong time. (You didn't prune them? It's possible an animal pruned them for you!)

**Winter Temperatures:** It's not unusual to get cold snaps that will cause some serious dieback which means the buds formed the previous year could die.

## The difference between Old Wood & New Wood

**Old Wood:** Old wood hydrangea set flower buds on last year's growth beginning in late summer and early fall. Old wood hydrangea should be trimmed sparingly and immediately after bloom. Bigleaf, Oakleaf, Mountain, and Climbing are types of old wood hydrangea.

**New Wood:** New wood hydrangea set flowers on the new growth that appears in the spring. These can safely be pruned in late winter or early summer. Panicle and Smooth are types of new wood hydrangea.

## How do I change the color?

Change the color of your hydrangea by adjusting the pH of your soil.

**Blue:** Add Aluminum Sulfate to the soil.

**Pink:** Add Dolomitic Lime to the soil.

**White:** Color cannot be changed.



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## What's the difference between mophead and lacecap flowers?

Mophead and lacecap refer to the two possible arrangements of the flowers on a hydrangea. These two terms are often associated with bigleaf and mountain hydrangea; but panicle, smooth and oakleaf hydrangea also have these flower arrangements. Climbing hydrangea and mountain hydrangea are the only two hydrangea groups that do not have true mophead flowers.

What we often refer to as the flowers on hydrangea are technically known as an inflorescence. This is a superstructure that is comprised of smaller florets. These florets can be fertile or sterile.

The fertile florets carry the pollen and nectar, they are capable of developing seed. These are smaller and star-like. When they are fully open, the stamens and pistils can be seen. The sterile flowers are larger and showier



*Fertile florets*



*Sterile florets*

Lacecap hydrangeas have a large number of visible fertile florets with an outer ring of sterile florets (photo on left). Newer mountain hydrangeas and hybrids (bigleaf x mountain) are being bred with more sterile florets. Nearly all native hydrangeas are in lacecap form and able to reproduce. If you are planting a garden for pollinators, you'll need to plant lacecap hydrangea instead of mophead.

On the other hand, mophead hydrangeas are much showier and often the choice for landscapes. The inflorescence is composed of mostly sterile florets which obscure any fertile florets that have developed.



*Lacecap*



*Mophead*