

pH for Hydrangea Color

ALKALINE	8.0
NEUTRAL	7.5
SLIGHTLY ACIDIC	7.0
ACIDIC	6.5
VERY ACIDIC	6.0
	5.5

Pink Hydrangea:

The pH in our North East Ohio soil is generally on the neutral to slightly **alkaline** side, so most hydrangea will reflect that in blooms that are light pink. Feeding with **Super Phosphate** promotes blooms, and adding a little garden lime delivers a stronger pink.

Blue Hydrangea:

Hydrangea need aluminum present in the soil to turn blue. There is 10 times more aluminum in the leaves of blue hydrangea than pink. Aluminum can only be available in this situation if the soil is more **acidic** (a lower pH). If you add any phosphate to the soil, it will unfortunately diminish the effect of the aluminum, so make sure you do not feed your blue hydrangea with anything high in phosphate (phosphorous). Potassium is a good additive as it assists the aluminum.

Fall is the proper time to adjust the soil pH, so in late October apply a 1/2 cup of **Ammonium Sulfite** to the base of each hydrangea, work into the soil lightly, and water. This should help lower the pH. Feel free to throw in old coffee grounds on a regular basis, too!

In spring, work in a scant 1/2 cup of **Aluminum Sulfate** around the base of each hydrangea and water. *Note: careful--too much Aluminum can be toxic to your plant!* Adding a little bit of **Potash** (potassium) helps promotes roots and blooms.

** Spraying with Messenger® helps promote even more blooms, especially if your hydrangea blooms on new wood!*

Planting: Spring is the best time for maximum root settling, but fall is fine as long as the plant is set slightly deeper into the soil. Always lightly break up and gently spread apart the roots when pulling plant out of the pot.

Soil: Always work humus or some type of organic-rich amendment into the ground. A fall topdressing of this every year is very good for the hydrangea.

Light: Mopheads and lacecaps (macrophylla types) prefer strong morning sun and light shade from hot afternoon rays. However, they will be fine in full sun if the soil is rich and holds moisture adequately. Oakleaf types prefer shade to light shade; Annabelle hydrangea can handle full sun to light shade; climbing hydrangea like light shade, and the PeeGee types can handle full sun to shade.

Watering: Hydrangea really don't like to be dried out, especially when young or newly planted. As mentioned before, amending the soil with rich organic matter will help in moisture retention.

Drying: The time to cut your hydrangea flowers for drying is when you can put your hand around the flower and slightly press the petals and they feel crispy, rather than dewy or soft. Cut some stem to go with the flower, then strip off the leaves and hang individually or in small, loose bunches upside down in a dark, dry, warm area. They should be dry in a few weeks. Keep out of direct sunlight.

SoilSoup®- This oxygenated compost tea is brewed here at Sunnybrook and provides billions of microbiota, or beneficial bacteria, to the soil. Breaking down clay soil and turning it into rich loam, eradicating nasty diseases like Black Spot and Powdery Mildew, providing a more moisture-retentive soil-- these are just some of the benefits of SoilSoup®. Available by the recycled gallon milk jug, SoilSoup is applied by sprinkling onto soil and grass, as well as used as a foliar spray. Ask us for more details...

Mycorrhizae: This is a beneficial fungus missing in today's garden soil, but evident in very old, very balanced soils. By attaching to a plant's roots, Mycorrhizae create a natural inoculant against diseases, encourage root growth up to 300% and enhance nutrient/water/oxygen uptake significantly. Available in granules or tabs and easy to apply. Ask us for details.

Winterizing: This is so important! Mound up the base of your hydrangea with leaf humus or compost, at least a foot high. Since most hydrangea bloom on old wood, and winter winds destroy the buds in late March and April, it pays to wrap your plant well with burlap, or erect a tall cage around it and stuff either protective covering with leaves or cut evergreens amongst the stems for protection. Remove in late April. An anti-desiccant spray, such as WiltPruf©, can also be *extremely* beneficial if sprayed monthly on the stems, especially the tips, starting right after the leaves fall off in autumn through March. This will really help with blooms next year.

Pruning: Do not prune mopheads and lacecaps, unless you know for sure they bloom on new wood. Most bloom on old wood, and if cut back, you effectively remove next season's blooms. If pruning for size control, then do so immediately after the plant is done blooming so there is still enough time for blooms to set. All other types can be cut back as needed in November/December.

TYPES of HYDRANGEA *(at least, the ones we like...)*

Round Mophead (macrophylla)

to insure flowers, *always* winter protect

‘All Summer Beauty’	pink to blue	3’	reliable flowering; rose fall foliage
‘Domotoi’	pink to blue	4’	frilly double flowers
‘Dooley’	pink to blue	3’	huge flowers; blooms thru fall; wonderful and hardy
‘Enziandom’	pink to deep blue	3’	the best of the blues! Worth the bluing efforts (tender)
‘Forever Pink’	pink	2’	reliable flowering; red fall foliage
‘Forever Summer’	pink to blue	4.5’	blooms on old <i>and</i> new wood; hardy
‘Glowing Embers’	pink to rose-red	2.5’	deep rosy-red with added horticultural lime
‘Merritt Supreme’	rose to blue	3’	gorgeous long bloomer in pots (tender) and store for winter
‘Nikko Blue’	pink to blue	4.5’	a classic
‘Pia’ (aka ‘Elfin Pink’)	pink to violet	18”	very long-blooming; great as a hedge; definitely winter-protect
‘Sister Therese’	white	3’	sometimes has a blush-pink hue

Lacecap Mophead (macrophylla)

tender so *always* winter-protect

‘Caerulea Lace’	pink to light blue	3’	reliable bloomer; glowing magenta fall foliage
‘Lilacina’	lavender	2.5’	lots and lots of blooms

Arborescens

great for drying, very hardy and reliable flowering, cut back in fall if needed

‘Annabelle’	chartreuse/white	4’	huge flowers; can be cut back for size
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Climbing

takes a few years to really catch on; a wonderful woody, root-clinging vine; pair w/ other climbers!

Petiolearis	white	12’	lacy white June blooms; prefers light shade
P. ‘Miranda’	white	12’	wonderful yellow and green variegated foliage

PeeGee (Paniculata grandiflora)

great for drying! Reliable flowering, cut back in late fall, hardy

Shrub form height 5’, Tree form height 8’

‘Grandiflora’	white to pink		the original cemetery classic
‘Kyushu’	white to pink		very long-blooming
‘Pink Diamond’	white to red		extremely vibrant color in late season
‘Tardiva’	white to pink		flowers stand up instead of hanging down
‘Unique’	white to pink		huge flowers

Serrata

this is definitely tender but worth the extra winterizing care!

‘Preziosa’	rose to violet	3’	multi colored flowers on the same plant
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Oakleaf (quercifolia)

***not* deer-resistant; prefers light shade in afternoon; fabulous red fall foliage**

quercifolia	white to pink	6’	blooms in June; brilliant fall foliage
‘Alice’	white to rose	5’	blooms in June; brilliant fall foliage
‘Pee Wee’	white to rose	2’	blooms in June; brilliant fall foliage
‘Sikes Dwarf’	white to pink	4’	blooms in June; brilliant fall foliage
‘Snow Queen’	white to pink	6’	blooms in June; brilliant fall foliage