



“Prune like a Pro!” 2021

HYDRANGEAS, part 1

Dormant Pruning: Hydrangeas that should be pruned during winter.

TITLE: HYDRANGEAS (part 1); dormant pruning

Description: Some Hydrangeas need to be pruned during the winter in order to bloom. Some hydrangeas should NOT be pruned during the winter. Others are rarely pruned.

Objective(s): Learn the different types of Hydrangeas so that you will prune at the right time of year. This video focuses on the Hydrangeas that should be pruned during winter.

WHAT: The most popular, and most common, Hydrangeas in the U.S. fall into four categories:
H. macrophylla, H. arborescens, H. paniculata, and H. quercifolia.

***** The *H. arborescens* and *H. paniculata* are pruned while dormant. *****

Common varieties include:

H. arborescens

‘Annabelle’
‘Grandiflora’

H. paniculata

‘Brussels Lace’ ‘Chantilly Lace’
‘Pee Gee’ ‘Pee Wee’
‘Pink Diamond’ ‘White Moth’
‘Limelight’

WHY: The *H. arborescens* and *H. paniculata* bloom on “new wood”, so pruning in winter will promote new growth when the plant comes out of dormancy. Blooms will develop on that new growth.

WHEN: Dormant pruning in east TN usually begins in January and can continue into February, and maybe into early March. Do not press your luck; prune in January or February – before buds form.

WHERE: *H. arborescens* prefers partial shade, but will perform well in full sun if given adequate moisture. *H. paniculata* prefers full sun to light shade.

HOW: *H. arborescens* is among the easiest to prune. Simply cut it back hard in early spring -- cut back all stems to about 12 inches from the soil line.

H. paniculata These can really get big (easily 10-15’, and upwards of 25’) but tolerate pruning enough to be turned into tree form. If size is of no concern, simply remove spent flowers and any broken stems.

SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT POINTS:

- If unsure of the type of Hydrangea that you have, do NOT prune until you determine the type (except to remove the 4 D's: dead, diseased, damaged, dysfunctional)
- The 4 D's can be removed any time of year
- Winter / Dormant Prune these types of Hydrangea:
 - *H. arborescens* is easy to prune; just cut all stems back to about 12". You are pruning for blooms.
 - *H. paniculata* is a large Hydrangea. Be sure it is planted in a place where it can get its normal size and prune it more like a tree. You are pruning to keep this plant attractive. Trying to prune to keep it small will have you in a perpetual battle.
- Pruning is done with hand pruners, and maybe loppers. Never use shears on a hydrangea of any type.

- Hydrangeas that are pruned AFTER flowering: (discussed in a later video)
 - *H. macrophylla*
 - *H. quercifolia*
 - 4 D's can be removed at any time

Additional Resources / References:

University of TN Extension: <https://www.tnstate.edu/faculty/ablalock/documents/Hydrangea.pdf>

UT PB1619-Pruning Landscape Trees, Shrubs and Groundcovers

https://trace.tennessee.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1047&context=utk_agexgard

Clemson Fact Sheet: [Hydrangea | Home & Garden Information Center \(clemson.edu\)](#)

Clemson, Pruning Hydrangea: <https://hgic.clemson.edu/pruning-hydrangeas/>

University of Maryland: [Guide to Pruning Hydrangeas | University of Maryland Extension \(umd.edu\)](#)

Knox County Master Gardeners website: www.knoxcountymastergardener.org

Knox County Master Gardeners Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/KnoxCountyMG>

Ask-a-Master Gardener / Knox County Extension Helpline: (865) 215-2340

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