



“Prune like a Pro!” 2021

HYDRANGEAS, part 2

Summer Pruning: Hydrangeas that are pruned after flowering.

TITLE: HYDRANGEAS (part 2); prune after flowering

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 after flowering.

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. macrophylla* and *H. quercifolia* are pruned in the summer / fall -- after flowering. *****

Common varieties include:

H. macrophylla

‘Endless Summer’

‘Nikko Blue’

‘Penny Mac’

H. quercifolia (Oakleaf)

‘Alice’

‘Harmony’

‘Ruby Slippers’

‘Snow Queen’

WHY: The *H. macrophylla* and *H. quercifolia* bloom on “old wood”, so pruning after flowering gives the plant time to develop “old wood” and develop buds that will be next year’s blooms. Once you see buds forming in late summer or early fall, STOP PRUNING!

WHEN: Start pruning as flowers start to fade. Stop pruning when you see new buds forming in late summer or early fall.

WHERE: *H. macrophylla* can be grown on less than the best soils. Select a site where water never stands. They should be planted where they get some late afternoon shade. Will not flower well in heavy shade. *H. quercifolia* benefits from light shade. It will likely suffer root rot if placed in poorly drained soil.

HOW: *H. macrophylla* includes mophead and lacecap varieties. They are very susceptible to low temperature injury. When they freeze back, the blooms are lost for the year and the only benefit is the foliage. In TN, wildly fluctuating temperatures in fall and spring does more damage than low winter temps. Temperature injury counts as one of the 4 D’s and should be removed when discovered. They tend to bloom in early summer, so prune as flowers fade in mid-to-late summer.

H. quercifolia can get large, and often are wider than they are tall. 12’ x 12’ is not uncommon. They tend to bloom early-to-mid summer, so prune late summer to early fall. They need minimal pruning; simply remove spent flowers and 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
- Summer Prune these types of Hydrangea, after flowering:
 - *H. macrophylla* is easy to prune; deadhead faded flowers
 - *H. quercifolia* is a large Hydrangea. Be sure it is planted in a place where it can get its normal size. Needs minimal pruning, usually nothing more than deadheading old blooms.
- Pruning is done with hand pruners, and maybe loppers. Never use shears on a hydrangea of any type.
- Hydrangeas that are pruned while dormant: (discussed in an earlier video)
 - *H. arborescens*
 - *H. paniculata*
 - 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 \(clemson.edu\)](https://hgic.clemson.edu/pruning-hydrangeas/)

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

University of Maryland: [Guide to Pruning Hydrangeas | University of Maryland Extension \(umd.edu\)](https://extension.umd.edu/hydrangea/)

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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