



# Hydrangea Growing Tips

**H**ydrangea are easy-care, colorful shrubs with lush foliage and beautiful blooms. Whether you're looking to add color to your garden or create a striking focal point, Hydrangeas are an ideal plant for Bay Area gardens. Our Garden Guru receives many Hydrangea pruning questions each month. We thought we'd share some tips on how to grow beautiful Hydrangeas!

## Pruning *Hydrangea microphylla*

*Hydrangea microphylla* (mophead and lacecaps) should be pruned in late summer/early fall right after flowers fade.

- Buds for next year's blossoms form in October!
- If a Hydrangea produces no flowers, it was likely pruned too late in the year.
- Prune stems back to the first or second pair of fat buds below the finished flower. Pruning can be as little as 4". Pruning farther back is unnecessary unless you want to reduce the shrub's height.
- Remove canes thinner than a pencil to encourage larger blooms on remaining cane, plus all small, twiggy growth and dead wood.

## Flower Color Modification

September/October is the time of year to treat the soil around Hydrangeas to change or deepen flower color. Use Hydrangea Blue or Aluminum sulfate to make flowers blue or purple (acid). Treat the soil with Agricultural Lime to make flowers pink (alkaline). If your Hydrangea is white, the color cannot be modified.

The harder wooded Hydrangeas, *H. arborescens*, *H. aspera* and *H. paniculata*, should be pruned in late winter. Their flowers are formed on new, spring wood.

## Pruning Harder Wooded Hydrangeas

*H. arborescens*, *H. aspera*, and *H. paniculata* should be pruned in late winter, as their flowers form on new spring wood.

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