

## Hydrangea Pruning

Depending on the cultivar, Hydrangea bloom from various types of growth each year. Knowing if your shrub blooms on old or new wood will help you make timely cuts. Certain varieties flower only on the previous year's growth. These cultivars should only be pruned to remove weak or dead stems after they have finished flowering. Others bloom on new wood, so an early spring or late fall pruning will improve a shrub's vigor and increase the size of flowers.

- **Old Wood Cultivars** Old Wood cultivars generally begin blooming in early summer and peter out by midsummer, though sporadic blooms may appear afterward. These shrubs form next year's flower buds in late summer or early fall, and to reduce the risk of removing these buds, pruning should be done just as the flowers begin to fade.

Cultivars in this category include:

- Bigleaf (macrophylla) Hydrangea
- Oakleaf Hydrangea

To tidy up, remove old blooms just below the flower head. To improve vigor, remove the oldest canes. When a hydrangea gets old and woody, it can produce smaller blooms. Regular removal of about 20% of the oldest canes at the soil line can keep the shrub vigorous, producing large and abundant flowers. The same method can keep a shrub from getting too tall by targeting the tallest canes for removal.

- **New Wood Cultivars** These types of hydrangeas bloom on new wood (new stems). The only time they cannot be pruned is in the spring ('Annabelle') or in the summer ('PeeGee') when they are preparing to bloom.

The panicle or 'Paniculata' cultivars in this category include:

- Annabelle Hydrangea- can be cut within a few inches of the ground each fall or early spring.
- Pinky Winky Hydrangea
- Little Lamb Hydrangea
- Tardiva Hydrangea
- Grandiflora Hydrangea
- Limelight Hydrangea
- Peegee Hydrangea

–Peegee or Limelight types can be pruned in the fall, winter, or spring. However, it is not necessary to prune them every year. It is suggested to trim out crossing branches and those that do not contribute to an attractive form whenever necessary.

Paniculata hydrangeas are the only hydrangeas that can be pruned into a tree-form. If one is attempting to grow a paniculata as a tree, the developing trunk and main top branches should not be removed. If a paniculata that is trained into a tree-form is cut or broken off close to the ground, it will grow back as a shrub unless the training and pruning is started again from the new shoots.

- **Hybrid Cultivar** Endless Summer Hydrangea blooms on old and new growth. Prune after flowering by cutting back flowering stems to a pair of healthy buds and prune out weak or winter-damaged stems in early spring.