

Hydrangea Pruning Cheat Sheet

Want more blooms on your Hydrangeas next year? First, figure out what kind of Hydrangea you have. Then follow our guide below to know when to prune.

What kind of Hydrangea do you have?

Bigleaf Hydrangea

(*Hydrangea macrophylla*)

ID Tip: Large, thick, glossy leaves & mophead-like blooms.

Frequently has flowers whose color changes with the soil pH. Selectively prune the dead and weaker stems, both old and new, using bypass pruners. **Common varieties include: Endless Summer, Bloomstruck.**

Oakleaf Hydrangea

(*Hydrangea quercifolia*)

ID Tip: Lobed, Oak-like leaves.

N. American native, attractive foliage (deeply lobed and turn a rich maroon in autumn) and can tolerate some shade and still blossom. Prune out the dead stems at the base in early spring. **Popular varieties: Snow Queen, Snow Flake, Munchkin, Ruby Slippers.**

Panicle Hydrangea

(*Hydrangea paniculata*)

ID Tip: Elongated, cone-shaped blooms.

Flowers begin white and turn rosy pink as they age. Easy to grow. Pruning encourages stronger stems; aim to cut back 1/3 of total height. Good cut flower. **Popular varieties: Vanilla strawberry, Limelight, Pinky Winky, Bobo, Quickfire.**

Smooth Hydrangea

(*Hydrangea arborescens*)

ID Tip: Large, snowball-like flowers.

North American Native. Tolerate light shade. White flowers, can reach 12-in diameter. Prune back to the ground. Heart shaped leaves. **Popular cultivar: Annabelle (3-5ft).**

Mountain Hydrangea

(*Hydrangea serrata*)

ID Tip: Similar to Bigleaf Hydrangea in bloom, but with smaller leaves.

Least common of the big leaf hydrangeas. Small flowers, extremely hardy in harsh winters. Lacecap flowers. Tidy habit. Great for pollinators. **Common varieties: Tuff Stuff, Tiny Tuff Stuff.**

Climbing Hydrangea

(*Hydrangea anomala subsp. petiolaris*)

ID Tip: Woody vine.

Clings by aerial rootlets along its stems. Heart-shaped, rich green foliage. Reaches 30-40ft tall and more. Part to full shade lover! Versatile with year round interest. If overgrown, do not prune back drastically. Prune gradually over 2-3 years.

Hydrangea Type	When to Prune	Where Flowers Appear
Bigleaf (H. macrophylla)	Summer, after flowering	On old growth
Oakleaf (H. quercifolia)	Summer, after flowering	On old growth
Panicle (H. paniculata)	Late winter, before spring growth	On new growth
Smooth (H. arborescens)	Late winter, before spring growth	On new growth
Mountain (H. serrata)	Summer, after flowering	On old growth
Climbing (H. anomala subsp. petiolaris)	Summer, after flowering	On old growth

Pruning.

Clean, oil and sharpen your bypass pruner before you start. Be ready with a disinfectant spray or anti-bacterial wipes between cuts. For larger branches (above 0.5"), use bypass loppers. Cut branches at 45° angle. Do not prune more than 1/3 of the top growth, unless specified above.