

Growing Tips 4

HYDRANGEAS Pruning for Blooms



Six hydrangea types most commonly grace our landscape. In eastern and southeastern Massachusetts, bigleaf hydrangeas (*Hydrangea macrophylla*), and their many cultivars, are especially popular.

Most hydrangeas thrive given:

- **Full sun or partial shade**, depending on the cultivar. Avoid hot, dry, sites
- **Moist, well-drained soils** enriched with organic matter. Mulch with 2-3 inches of bark mulch or other organic mulch to conserve moisture.

Hydrangea Type	Best Time to Prune	Zone	Notes
bigleaf hydrangea, French hydrangea (<i>H. macrophylla</i>)	Right after bloom, in summer; prune winter-damaged stems in late spring, after leaf-out	6- 9	Blooms in spring, early summer, then flower buds produced on summer growth Native to Asia
mountain hydrangea (<i>H. macrophylla</i> var. <i>serrata</i>)	(same as above)	5 - 9	(same as above)
smooth hydrangea (<i>H. arborescens</i>)	Late winter, early spring, before leaf-out; can cut back to 6" – 12" above ground.	4 - 9	Flower buds produced on spring/early summer growth, then blooms mid-summer native to Eastern United States
panicle hydrangea (<i>H. paniculata</i>)	Late winter, early spring, before leaf-out	4- 7	Flower buds produced on spring growth, then blooms mid-summer Native to Asia
oakleaf hydrangea (<i>H. quercifolia</i>)	Right after bloom, in summer; prune winter-damaged stems in late spring, after leaf-out	5 - 6	Blooms early summer, then flower buds produced on summer growth Native to Southeastern United States
climbing hydrangea (<i>H. anomala</i> subsp. <i>petiolaris</i>)	Usually not necessary, except to remove damaged wood	5 - 8	Native to Asia

When is the best time to prune hydrangeas?

It depends on the type and when they produce flower buds. **See table above for guidance.**

Why aren't they blooming?

There are three possibilities:

- **Too much shade**
- **Improper pruning**
- **Winter damage** to stems, or **frost damage** to flower buds – especially likely with bigleaf hydrangea (*Hydrangea macrophylla*) and mountain hydrangea (*Hydrangea serrata*).

Nifty Note

Look for newer cultivars of bigleaf hydrangea that bloom on last summer's (old wood) **and** current spring (new wood) growth. Cultivars such as 'Endless Summer'®, 'Blushing Bride'™ and 'Twist-n-shout'™, 'Red Sensation', 'Double Pink' will bloom again on the current year's growth if you remove faded blooms regularly.



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