

How to prune Hydrangeas

One key question to answer prior to getting out the pruners is does your type of hydrangea bloom on old wood or new wood? Old wood means that buds for NEXT year's flowers are formed at the end of this year's growing season. Incorrect pruning may lead to fewer flowers the following year but won't harm your plant. Just make sure you know what you have **before you cut**. **Always use sharp and clean tools**.

Hydrangea paniculata (f.e. Limelight, Quick Fire) & Hydrangea arborescens (f.e. Annabelle, Incrediball)

- Produce flowers on new wood (new growth of current season).
- Cut back in spring as soon as the new leaves unfold. The amount you cut back will determine the size of the shrub.
- Prune to just above a pair of healthy buds on each stem



Hydrangea quercifolia - Oakleaf Hydrangea (f.e. Ruby Slippers, Snowcicle)

- Need only minimal pruning in spring to remove dead and over-long stems.
- Cut out crossing or long stems



Hydrangea macrophylla and Hydr. serrata (f.e. Endless Summer)

- Flowers on previous year's growth **OR** on old and new wood (rebloomers)
- Although the flowers on mophead hydrangeas can, in mild areas, be removed as soon as they have faded, it is best to leave them on the plant over winter to provide some frost protection for the tender growth buds below.
- Remove the dead flowerheads in **late** spring, cutting back the stem to the first strong, healthy pair of buds down from the faded bloom. Best done when the first leaves emerge.
- Flower buds of Hydrangea macrophylla and serrata are susceptible to late frost, which can result in less flowers, but a lush plant. To prevent this, in early spring when a frost is expected, cover the shrub with a light fleece.

