



# Hydrangea Cheat Sheet

~Our advice for Virginian Gardens~

All Hydrangeas listed (and most of their popular cultivars) are available year-round at our Nursery.

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***Always remember: No pruning is always better than wrong pruning!  
Most Hydrangeas only need pruning when they have been in the ground for more than 3 years and are requiring shaping or removal of dead / damaged branching.***

## H. macrophylla (and cultivars)

- Bloom on old wood
- Routine Cosmetic Pruning
  - March - early May
  - Dead-heading
    - Each stem with old blooms should be cut back to just above the uppermost pair of new buds
    - Take care to avoid damaging any green shots, these provide the new season's flowers
- Dead Leaf Removal
  - Hydrangeas often will have dead / ugly leaves throughout the winter seasons but also throughout the Spring - Fall
  - Always remove these by hand, it allows for new foliage to flush
- Dead Branch Removal
  - April - May
  - Cut down to where new, vigorous growth is appearing
  - Stems not showing any rejuvenation should be removed at ground level
  - New season's growth will appear in plenty from the base of the plant
    - If too many soft shoots grow, and crowd light out of the plant, remove these during the growing season to allow light into the plant

*\*Do not stress: if you accidentally cut-off live stems, you will not have blooms for one year but they will come the following season!\**

## H. arborescens (and cultivars)

- Bloom on new wood
- After the plant has been established for at least 3 years:
  - Cut back branches to about 1 ft. from the ground
    - This should happen late Jan- Feb. / every year

- New branches will produce buds and bear large flower heads all in the same season

## **H. paniculata (and cultivars)**

- Bloom on old wood
- 2 main methods:
  - Method 1 - preferred
    - Leave them totally unpruned
    - After several years of establishing they will be beautiful!
    - Considered the most traditional/formal look of a hydrangea
    - You can see historical examples of these at the Kalmthout Arboretum, Belgium
  - Method 2
    - January - February
    - Prune previous year's wood back to leave only 2 buds at the base of each stem
    - This will produce new shoots & large blooms the same season
    - Remember for paniculatas: fewer number of shoots allowed to grow - the larger the panicles will be

## **H. quercifolia (and cultivars)**

- Bloom on old wood
- Pruning should be about shaping the plant and not coaxing blooms
  - These cuts can be made in early Fall, just after blooms stop
  - Dead & damaged branches can be removed anytime

## **H. petiolaris**

- Bloom on old wood
- Do not prune unless there are dead/damaged branches
- Pruning can happen when blooming stops around early Fall