



**PLANTING:** Follow Sipkens planting instructions for how to plant.

### **CHOOSING A LOCATION:**

If you are looking for a Hydrangea in a hot and sunny location or a location that is exposed to strong winds, your best options are the Panicle (e.g. Limelight) and Arborescens (e.g. Annabelle) groups of Hydrangeas

If you prefer the mophead, lacecap, oakleaf, or climbing Hydrangeas, they will perform best in a morning only or late day sun location. A location that is too shaded may prevent the plant from flowering, though it will usually grow properly.

### **FERTILIZING**

For the purpose of keeping hydrangeas healthy and actively growing, most fertilizers are sufficient. To encourage blooming, use a 15-30-15 Ultra Bloom fertilizer.

If you wish to have blue or purple flowers on your Hydrangeas, this can be achieved by using Aluminum Sulphate as a soil ph adjustment in most soils of Sarnia Lambton. The Miracle Grow Shake and Feed for Acid Loving Plants will work as well. Keep in mind that this method works on the Hydrangeas that are supposed to have blue flowers from the mountain or mophead families of Hydrangeas.

Over-fertilizing with a high nitrogen fertilizer can delay flowering, instead promoting vigorous growth.

### **Pruning- Method 1**

Mophead and Lacecaps (macrophylla or serrulata– usually pink, blue, purple, some are white)

Oakleaf hydrangeas (quercifolia- white-rose blooms, leaves shaped like oak leaves)

Prune these groups of Hydrangeas for the following reasons. (1) To remove last season's or spent flower heads prune a few inches below the spent blooms. (2) To reduce the size of the plant prune at the end of July. This is to shape unruly branches or to shorten and round the plant. It is best to only reduce the size of the plant by 25-30% so as to not stimulate too much new growth. (3) To remove any dead stems or three-four year old wood to make room for new growth, prune down to the ground.

The reason to be careful on when and how to prune these Hydrangeas is that most of the flowers are developed as buds on the previous years' growth. Hard pruning on these can greatly limit the number of flowers possible, in the same way as an exceptionally hard winter or late frost can.

### **Pruning- Method 2**

Panicle and arborescens (paniculata or arborescens- usually white to rose-coloured flowers sometimes grown as a treeform)

Prune these groups of Hydrangeas each year to stimulate strong growth and larger blossoms. These two families of Hydrangeas should be pruned approximately 50% back each year, removing any old blossoms or dead wood. The arborescens (Annabelle or Incrediball) type can even be pruned to the ground although we recommend leaving at least 12-18" of last years' wood to support the new growth and heavy flowers.

For paniculata (such as PG and 'Limelight') that are grown in a treeform, we recommend pruning to a tidy framework of branching of a 18-24" diameter head as well as removing three to four year old wood as well as any dead stems.

# CAN'T GET YOUR HYDRANGEAS TO BLOOM FAITHFULLY?

Most Mophead and Lacecap and Oakleaf Hydrangeas bloom on buds that are developed on last years' growth.

Cold winter winds and late frosts damage these buds and flowering can be quite poor.

Try mulching 12-24" up the stems of your hydrangeas to protect these buds. (Wrapping the plant with burlap also can help.)

Rake the mulch away from the plant after the danger of frost is past in spring.



This is what a properly mulched hydrangea looks like.



This Hydrangea was mulched properly and has great buds and blooms the following season.