



# OGDEN'S DESIGN & PLANTINGS, INC.

WWW.OGDENS.COM

TEL: (631) 473-5064

## CONTROLLING THE COLOR OF YOUR HYDRANGEAS

### Design & Installation:

- Natural Gardens
- Japanese Gardens
- Bed Maintenance
- Therapeutic Gardens
- Paths & Patios
- Stone & Brickwork
- Specialty Gardens
- Seasonal Color & Interest

### July To-Do List:

- Deadhead annuals and perennials
- Prune climbing roses
- Order autumn annuals
- Check irrigation systems
- Divide and transplant oriental poppies
- Divide and transplant perennials
- Fertilize annuals, container plants and roses

### Ogdenwords:

**Dentate:** coarsely toothed, with the indentations rather spreading and regularly divided, as applied to a leaf margin.

**Sepal:** a modified leaf in the outermost whorl of a flower. The sepals enclose the petals and other parts.

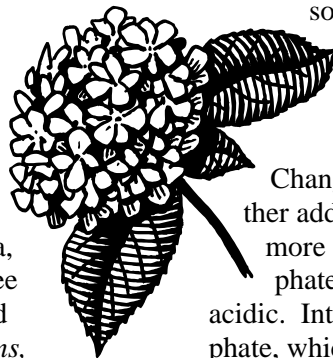
Did you ever wonder why some hydrangeas are pink and others are blue? Hydrangeas are an enormous family with an infinite range of flower colors. Some varieties are purely white, but others can vary from electric blue to hot pink, pale pink, lavender or vivid purple. Color is not only affected by plant variety, but also soil pH. Variety will affect the range of color, which is usually blue to pink or pink to purple, while soil pH will affect where in that range of color the flower turns.

Obviously you can't change the color of white hydrangeas. Some of the species and varieties that fall into this category include: oak leaf hydrangea, climbing hydrangea, pee gee hydrangea, 'Annabelle' and other *Hydrangea aborescens*, and white *macrophyllas* like 'Sister Theresa' or 'Teller White'.

All others will have a range in color that changes as the plant's buds develop into a bloom and then ages to an open blossom. Even some of the white varieties will get a hint of color as they age that can fluctuate from blue to pink depending on the soil pH. What is even more exciting, as a gardener you can directly affect the color of your plant by the

amendments you choose to add to the soil.

Soil pH is measured on a scale of 0-14, where 7 is neutral, below 7 is acidic and above 7 is alkaline. Alkaline soils produce pink flowers and acidic soils yield blue ones. Not all varieties will turn purple or lavender, but those that can do so in one of two ways. In the neutral range, some turn purple when transitioning from alkaline to acidic soil and some pink varieties turn purple instead of blue when grown in acidic soil.



Changing soil pH is done by either adding lime to make the soil more alkaline or aluminum sulphate to make the soil more acidic. Interestingly, ammonium sulphate, which also makes the soil acidic, will not work since aluminum ions are needed to make the change. These amendments can be added at any time of the year. Just make sure to follow the manufacturer's recommendations.

Keep in mind that manipulating the color of hydrangeas is unpredictable and that the changes will not happen overnight. If you need help, give us a call and we'll try to get the color you want.

### Farm Seminar ~ Summer Pruning of Hydrangeas and How to Change their Color

This is the peak season for hydrangeas and color. Learn what to do to change their color and how best to keep them in check - when and how to prune.

RB of RB Irrigation will attend and present irrigation options.

**Sunday, July 15th at 11.00am**

**Get Creative with Color  
CALL (631) 473-5064**



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## Plant of the Month

**Common Name:** *Hydrangea Mathilda Güges* (aka *Mathilde Gütges*)  
**Scientific Name:** *Hydrangea macrophylla* (hy-DRAIN-juh mak-roh-FIL-uh)  
**Family Name:** (Hydrangeaceae)



**Description:** Deciduous shrub with lustrous dark green leaves and fabulous flowerheads.

**Mature Size & Growth Rate:** 4-5' tall and wide. Medium growth rate.

**Flower:** Mophead flower type which may be pink, blue or violet, or a combination of all three. Sharply dentate sepals to entire head. Flowers from mid-summer.

**Cultural Requirements:** Sun to partial shade and consistently moist soil. Hardy and reliable.

**Native Habitat:** Native to southern and eastern Asia from Japan to China, the Himalayas and Indonesia.

**Additional Comments:** Incredible rich range of color! Flowers are good for drying and preserving.