

Winter Hydrangea Care

Hydrangeas are a favorite in many Oklahoma gardens, offering large beautiful blooms that are a showstopper in any home landscape. Hydrangeas require little care but there are a few important tips to keep in mind to ensure abundant blooms in the spring and summer.

In Oklahoma, Hydrangeas typically do not need winter protection and are cold hardy. However, hydrangeas, like many plants, can be susceptible to damage by late spring cold snaps. If your hydrangeas have swelling buds and a freeze is expected, cover the plant to the ground. The covering can be removed the next morning once temperatures rise above freezing. Often, gardeners are unsure whether to prune their hydrangeas. Some varieties of hydrangeas require pruning to produce more abundant blooms, while others will not bloom if pruned. It is important to know which variety of hydrangea is in your garden before you break out the pruning shears.

There are several different varieties of hydrangeas that are commonly grown in Oklahoma, such as:

Smooth Hydrangeas: New blooms typically develop on new wood and so hydrangea plants can be cut to the ground in late winter or early spring. For a larger plant, cut select branches down to the ground leaving others at various lengths of 1 to 2 feet. Varieties of smooth hydrangeas include: Anabelle and Endless Summer.



Panicle Hydrangeas (*multiflora*): This variety of hydrangea may be lightly pruned to maintain its shape or heavily cut back to make the shape of the plant more compact. If Panicle hydrangeas are cut to the ground, the new stems may be weaker, leaving your blooms laying on the ground. To increase bloom size, you can prune the plant back but leaving a framework of old growth to minimize drooping. This type of hydrangea is the only variety that can be pruned into a tree form. Varieties of Panicle hydrangea include: Limelight, Firelight, and Pinky Winkie among others



Big Leaf Hydrangeas: The Big Leaf Hydrangeas are the most diverse group of hydrangeas. These hydrangeas bloom only on old wood which was grown the previous summer. Pruning last season's wood will remove the bud in which the flowers grow and you will have no blooms. You can always prune out dead wood and, if you want to shape the plant, prune lightly in the summer after the plant has bloomed. Popular Big Leaf Hydrangeas grown in Oklahoma include Oak Leaf Hydrangeas, Mophead Hydrangeas, and Lace-cap Hydrangeas.

