

# In The Garden

## How Hydrangeas Can Heighten Your Enjoyment Of Your Yard

(NAPSA)—Hydrangeas are growing on home gardeners. The big, bold flowers add excitement to many gardens and are terrific for both fresh and dried arrangements. Desirable as hydrangeas are, they have a reputation for being tricky to grow. Fortunately, with many new, easy-to-grow varieties available, even the most inexperienced gardener can enjoy lots of flowers with very little effort.

### New Varieties

Reblooming hydrangeas, such as the Let's Dance series from Proven Winners, are an excellent example of how new varieties make gardening easier. Unlike older varieties of *Hydrangea macrophylla*, these plants bloom on both this season's and last season's growth. Gardeners who have been frustrated by healthy-looking plants that never bloom will have more success with these plants. Moonlight has big, vividly colored mophead flowers and rich burgundy fall foliage. Starlight is the first reblooming lacecap hydrangea and has elegant, brightly colored whorls of florets.

### Pink, White and Blue

*H. macrophylla* flower color is affected by soil pH. It is difficult for hydrangeas to absorb aluminum from alkaline soils (those with pH higher than 7), so the plants produce pink or red flowers. Aluminum is more available in acidic (pH lower than 7) soils and the plants there produce blue flowers. Soils can be amended to adjust the bloom color; use aluminum sulfate to encourage blue flowers and horticultural lime to produce pink flowers.

Hardy hydrangeas, *H. paniculata*, have been mainstays of



**Starlight (left) and Moonlight (right) are just two of the many easy-to-grow varieties of hydrangeas available to brighten up your garden.**

northern gardens for years. They produce cone-shaped bundles of white florets in midsummer and bloom on the current season's growth. Hardy hydrangeas are reliable bloomers even after harsh winters.

Limelight may be one of the best varieties. Its soft green summer flowers transform to pink and burgundy in fall and dry beautifully. Proven Winners now has Pinky Winky hardy hydrangea as well. Pinky Winky has exceptionally large (12" plus) panicles that start out white and turn to pink as they age. New white florets keep growing at the tips of the panicles as older florets at the base turn pink, so the plant displays unique bicolor blooms in late summer.

Annabelle is another favorite of cold-climate gardeners and of many southerners as well. A smooth hydrangea (*H. arborescens*), Annabelle is adaptable and easy to grow, though its white snowball flowers tend to flop over into an untidy tangle.

Two new varieties are expected to set the standard for smooth hydrangeas. Incrediball has flowers up to 12" across and exceptionally sturdy stems that hold the blooms upright even after heavy rain. Coming in 2010, Invincibelle Spirit is the first pink Annabelle-type hydrangea.

### How Hydrangeas Help Combat Cancer

Gardeners who have been limited to white flowers can now enjoy hot-pink blooms and help fund breast cancer research with a purchase of Invincibelle Spirit. Proven Winners will donate 5 cents from each purchase to the Breast Cancer Research Foundation (BCRF). That organization is dedicated to preventing breast cancer and finding a cure in our lifetime by funding clinical and translational research worldwide.

### Learn More

For more about BCRF, visit [www.bcrfure.org](http://www.bcrfure.org). For facts about hydrangeas, visit [www.provenwinners.com](http://www.provenwinners.com).