



# The Mid-South Hydrangea Society In Bloom!

Volume 1, Issue 1

February 2005

## From the President:

We are so happy to have launched the Mid-South Hydrangea Society and have you as charter members! As I was flipping through one of my new winter garden catalogs\* to the hydrangea section, I love that it called hydrangeas a 'flamboyantly cheerful tribe' and think that is also descriptive of our new group. I'm sure we're going to have a lot of fun with hydrangeas. You can see how we're growing from the enclosed list of members and hope you will also invite your gardening friends and neighbors to join us. We are thinking of sponsoring a small booth at one of the upcoming garden shows to generate interest, so if you are willing to spend a few hours at a booth, please sign up at the February meeting or email me at [hydrangea@midsouth.rr.com](mailto:hydrangea@midsouth.rr.com).



As you can see, though we don't yet have our web site set up, we do have an email address ([hydrangea@midsouth.rr.com](mailto:hydrangea@midsouth.rr.com)). Please use it to keep us informed of hydrangea events and information, and to let us know what speakers you would like to hear. Or, you can contact me at 452-4667.

The Mid-South Hydrangea society is for people who love the genus hydrangea and want to learn more about them, especially their culture, habits, hardiness, and performance. We also plan to keep you informed of the new hydrangea varieties available at local nurseries later this spring. We are eager to organize our first annual tour and hydrangea sale in June, and we want to come and see *your* garden – no matter how small or imperfect. Please contact **Anne Riordan** (683-7458 or [mailmanann@aol.com](mailto:mailmanann@aol.com)) if you are willing to be part of this first tour.

If you volunteer at the Botanic Garden, please consider donating some of your hours to the Hydrangea Society to help offset our room rental expense this first year. We want to keep our dues low, and these volunteer hours help. Be sure to sign the volunteer book at the front desk on the Mid-South Hydrangea Society page designating the hours you worked.

We are eager to see you at our second meeting on February 7, and hope you can help with door prizes and/or refreshment donations. Meetings are normally on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of February, April, and October, with a tour and sale date to be announced in June. We thought you might prefer not to have our next meeting on Valentine's Day, so we will meet a week early to hear **Kyle McLane** of the Memphis Botanic Garden. I am eager to listen to Kyle and hope our association will be instrumental in expanding the number and variety of the hydrangea collection at the MBG.

See you on the seventh!

Linda Lanier

*\*Forest Farm (forestfarm.com), 528 page black & white catalog, 62 varieties of hydrangea, including 8 serratas! Call 541-846-7269 or mail to Forest Farm, 990 Tetherow Road, Williams, OR 97544-9599.*



## Hydrangeas: Cultivation, Propagation, Use, Drying, and Companions

*(From American Hydrangea Society Newsletter, Winter 2003, by Tara Dillard, American Hydrangea Society president, garden designer, writer, and lecturer shares her insight on how to best design a garden with hydrangeas)*

When you first fall in love with something, you think you are just falling in love with that hydrangea. But look at that hydrangea and see what is near it. You might also be liking the flagstone path, the brick edge, a focal point, the sweep of evergreens behind, or the ground changes in elevation. But guaranteed that when you are liking something about a hydrangea garden, you are liking more than one element.

After seeing Penny McHenry's garden for the first time 10 years ago, it helped Tara to learn to design with hydrangeas. Penny's garden had a lot of ivy and flowering shrubs. But now she has something happening in her garden every two weeks. In the winter, when the hydrangeas are dormant, with their old blooms and exfoliating bark, she now has the camellia sasanquas and japonicas and evergreens as her backing.

Now a big proponent of conifers, Tara plants them to go along with hydrangeas because they are evergreen and peaking when the hydrangeas are completely dormant. With their shapes as focal points (round, weeping, and cone shaped) and incredible colors peaking in winter (golden, blues, and silvers), they make a perfect match for hydrangeas. "When you think of hydrangeas, think evergreens", Tara says. "Preferably conifers and camel-

lia sasanquas." And by the way, there are conifers that will take shade!

Again, it's important to not only have your evergreens but your focal point. Think of your garden in February, and think of your garden inside your house looking out the windows. What will you be looking at? Place everything as if it's a painting on the wall. When you're looking out your window, make it look like a painting.

How does Tara fix what she calls a "testicular garden design" (a garden designed with Otto Leuken laurels, dwarf Indian hawthornes fronted by junipers)? With hydrangeas. She keeps 100% what is there and moves things around so she can add oakleaf hydrangeas, mopheads, arborescens, and paniculatas. "When you add hydrangeas, you are taking a landscape and turning it into a garden," Tara adds.

Two things:

1. Weather – can survive variation in weather  
Using large traditional plants – camellias, azaleas, hydrangeas (they can survive variations in weather and take up a lot of space.)
2. Time – Flowering shrubs take less time and low maintenance.

### Evergreen shrubs and perennials:

camellia japonica	conifers
C. sasanqua	epimedium
helleborus	azalea
pieris c.	ephalotaxus
mahonia	nandina
aucuba	evergreen clematis
variegated aucuba	weeping yaupon
saxifrage stolonifera	leucothoe
elaagnus	rhododendron
moss	ilix

### Deciduous shrubs and herbaceous perennials:

forsythia	foxglove
quince	astilbe
edgeworthia	Japanese climbing fern
roses	impatiens
clematis	oxalis
buddleia	feverfew
vitex	ageratum
lotus	
veronica	
waterlilies	

### Other planting tips:

Plant dwarf daffodils and crocus at the base of hydrangeas so when they have finished blooming, the hydrangeas hide the dead foliage.

Plant hydrangeas in pots! They do very well in containers on your deck and patio. This has been done for over a century. You can leave them in containers all year long on your patio.

A hydrangea espalier? Yes! Treat them like a vine. Tara has been planting hydrangea espaliers in her client's gardens. She has also been pruning an oakleaf hydrangea around her own window and is now getting more blooms from it. Gertrude Jekyll, the first garden designer on this planet, said the first thing she considers is what to put on the house.

### The Big Question. When do you prune a hydrangea?

There are so many hydrangeas and so many answers!

- ✿ H. macrophylla after bloom and before August 1.
- ✿ H. arborescens (Annabelle) in early March — prune entire plant down to 6-12 inches. Think of a basketball cut in half, that's the shape you want.
- ✿ H. paniculata in early March and you'll have large blooms. If you decide not to prune, you'll have smaller blooms.
- ✿ H. quercifolia, after bloom (if needed).

*"Make a pruning rule and make a liar of yourself"*

### Color/pH

Mophead hydrangeas are affected by soil pH.

- ✿ Low pH is acidic/blue. Add lime to make less acid and obtain pink flowers.
- ✿ High pH is alkaline/pink. Pink hydrangeas that are guaranteed pink will turn blue in regular Georgia (or Tennessee) soil.

### Drying

Wait until after July 4 to start feeling the blossoms and see if they feel papery. Once they feel papery, cut them, strip all the foliage, then put in a vase (no water) so hydrangea isn't touching another bloom and put it in a place away from direct sunlight.

### Cuttings

Take cuttings late summer/early fall (typically last week of August/first week of September), when the nights start feeling cooler. Cut stem (underneath the leaf), then cut half of the leaf off if large. Put in 4 inch pot with potting soil up to the bottom of the leaf (this triggers physiological dynamics so the plant knows to put out roots or it's going to die.) Put flat on ground under high shade. Once fall passes, you don't need to water them again. They can stay out all winter.

## Rooting

### Penny McHenry's Method:

*Take an outer branch of a hydrangea, pull it down to the ground, lay a heavy stone or brick over it and it will start sending out roots along the leaf nodes. After a few months, chop the branch in pieces and you'll have separate plants.*

### Other Tara Tips

- ✿ Use white hydrangeas such as "Annabelle" to cool off your garden
- ✿ Use dwarf macrophyllas at the base of larger hydrangeas.
- ✿ Let tardivas be trees!

### Tara's ground zero basic list of hydrangeas (start with these):

- ✿ H. macrophylla 'Penny Mac' and 'Margaret Moseley', Lacecap 'Blue Bird'
- ✿ H. quercifolia 'Snowflake', 'Alice'
- ✿ H. paniculata 'Tardiva'
- ✿ H. arborescens 'Annabelle'

Why these? Tara recommends hydrangeas with repeat blooms, ones that can take being moved and if you're on a budget, cuttings are easy to do.



### Tara on the Web

Check Tara's web log, a personal online garden journal. [www.agardenview.biz](http://www.agardenview.biz) to see what she is doing and what is happening in her garden!

## Mark your calendar...

Mid-South Hydrangea Society meetings this year will be on February 7, April 11, and October 10, at 7pm at the Botanic Garden. The date is still open for the June Garden Tour and Hydrangea Sale.



### *We Need Your Garden!*

We're planning the 1st Annual Mid-South Hydrangea Society Garden Tour in June. If you (or another hydrangea lover) would like to showcase your garden for this event, contact Anne Riordan at

683-7458

or

mailmanann@bellsouth.net

## *"Hydrangeas & Pruning"*

*Kyle McLane*

February 7, 2005 — 7:00PM

Our speaker for the Monday, February 7th, 2005, meeting will be Kyle McLane. Many of you have probably already met Kyle who has been a horticulturist for the Memphis Botanic Garden for 5 years. He will provide a slide presentation to us on the different cultivated and native species of hydrangea and the proper pruning techniques for them. Did you know the new remontant (reblooming) hydrangea forms such as 'Endless Summer' require a different pruning approach? Kyle will tell us how and when to prune to get a satisfactory re-bloom on them. How do you address pruning on the climbing *Hydrangea anomala* 'Petiolaris'? You don't know? Neither do I. We need to be there and find out!

Did you know that the Memphis Botanic Gardens has a hydrangea collection? Well, they do and Kyle will provide us with a map of where they're located within the gardens and he's going to provide us a listing of the varieties grown there. In addition, the Botanic Garden spring plant sale will have a selection of hydrangeas available for purchase and we hope to get a "sneak peek" listing of those, too. So please make the effort to attend our second meeting — we have an opportunity to pick up a lot of hydrangea tips and information. See you there.



## 2005 Hydrangea Conference

May 19-21, 2005

Center for Applied Nursery Research &  
Augusta Technical College  
Dearing & Thomson, Georgia

The conference will start with a pretour at the University of Georgia in Athens. It includes a visit to the greenhouses, lath, shade garden, field plots, and will end at Coach Vince Dooley's garden with a reception and barbecue. Next day, lectures and tours are scheduled in Thomson and Dearing, home of the Center for Applied Nursery Research at McCorkle Nurseries.

You'll hear outstanding hydrangea experts:

- Dr. Michael Dirr
- Dan Hinkley, Heronswood Nursery
- Penny McHenry, Founder of American Hydrangea Society
- Tara Dillard, current President of American Hydrangea Society
- Eddie Aldridge, Aldridge Gardens
- Gene Griffin & Elizabeth Dean, Wilkerson Mill Gardens
- Mal Condon, Hydrangea Farm Nursery
- Jonathan Pedersen, Bailey's Nursery
- ... and many others!

There'll also be plant sales and book signings by Michael Dirr and Tara Dillard. For information on all conference activities, registration form and fees, see [www.canr.org](http://www.canr.org).

*A special bonus — Master Gardeners and Hydrangea Society Members receive a 10% discount!*

### Membership Update:

**We've had an enthusiastic response to the founding of the Mid-South Hydrangea Society. Thanks to all for expressing an interest in the organization — we look forward to seeing you at future meetings and events!**

Ashworth, Bill & Genie  
Baldauf, Roxane  
Balsman, Kathy  
Britt, Betty  
Britton, Deanna  
Brown, Caroline  
Brown, Sally  
Cannon, Karen  
Carter, Lynda  
Chism, Harold  
Colturi, Tom  
Crump, William  
Davidson, June & Punk  
Dunn, Walter  
Durham, Larry

Fineberg-Buchner, Toot  
Goetsch, Teresa  
Jones, Jane  
Lanier, Linda  
Logan, Nancie  
Mangold, Therese  
Melton, Leona  
Miller, Phyllis  
Mischke, Betsy  
Moore, Alice  
Morris, Jessica  
Norris, Richard & Jean  
Orton, Linda  
Patterson, Pat  
Peyton, Debbie

Quarles, Robert  
Raiford, Carol  
Ransom, Kristi  
Riordan, Anne  
Robbins, Guy  
Rogers, Michelle  
Shindler, Susan  
Stovall, Karen  
Templeton, Loyd  
Terrell, Katy  
Wade, Mary  
Woodall, Fred  
Wright, Kathi  
Zoller, Marian



## How Do You Prune Hydrangeas?

(With *secateurs*, pronounced "snips.") It depends on the species and the age of the plant. Pruning is always a matter of concern for gardeners and in the case of the hydrangea *macrophyllas* too little is preferable to too much. The best way to prune them is to thin older plants (4+ years) by cutting out a portion (say, one-fourth to one-third) of the old woody canes to the base and any dead wood in late winter before the new buds begin to swell. Do not prune by shortening stems, except to remove just the old flowerheads, as you are likely to cut off your flowerbuds. Actually, we think it is best to leave the dried heads of old blooms on the plant until winter's end to help protect new flowerbuds. When danger of late frost is past in your area, carefully deadhead old blooms by cutting off above the first pair of vigorous new buds. If need be, a young plant may be cut back in June/July to enhance its structure or fullness and this should not harm next year's bloom. Likewise, if you need to rejuvenate an overgrown, tired, or non-blooming older *macrophylla*, you should do this corrective pruning, shaping and thinning smack in the middle of mid-summer for the same reason: your shrub will have the maximum time to produce new branches and harden off before the first fall freezes. A few of the *macrophyllas* are remountant, re-blooming, but this is not exactly the same as blooming on new wood. They will re-bloom if you grow them in a zone where summer lasts long enough (typically 12 weeks after pruning or frost damage).

As to the other species, you can prune *H. arborescens* and *H. paniculata* in late winter as they bloom on new growth and will respond to this pruning by sending out new growth and flowers. *H. quercifolia* and *H. aspera* are much like *H. macrophylla* in that they bloom on the previous year's growth and so should not be pruned at the end of winter as flowers will be lost. Renewal pruning (removing 1/4th of the old wood at the base) is suggested on an annual basis.

## Reasons Mophead Hydrangeas Fail to Bloom

A late spring freeze arrives and ruins the developing bloom buds. The freeze may be light and even go unnoticed until one realizes that the blooms are not forming. Or it may kill all the emerging leaves, too. As a result, most of the new growth comes from the roots. When this occurs, you know you have a problem.



Most flower buds develop on the old stems. Once these stems are damaged in a late freeze, new flowers will not appear until the following year and only then if it is a milder spring. (This is the rule for the vast majority of mopheads [*macrophyllas*] but there are exceptional hydrangeas that will bloom despite this damage).

## Consider Joining the American Hydrangea Society

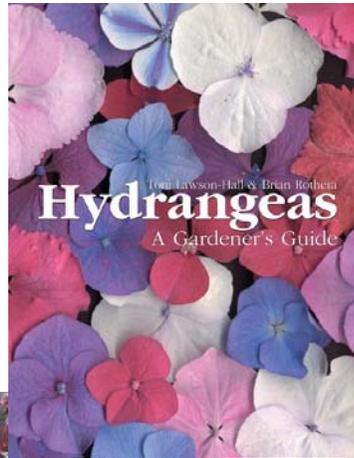
The American Hydrangea Society was formed in 1994 for people who love hydrangeas and want to "study and learn about the genus *Hydrangea*, its species and cultivars, as well as its culture, habits, hardiness, and performance."\* A fascination with the hydrangea in all of its forms is the common thread that unites the members of the AHS.

Membership in the AHS entitles you to a newsletter containing educational information from meetings, announcements on hydrangea events, and information about books and articles that deal with hydrangeas.

For more information, go to  
[www.americanhydrangeasociety.org](http://www.americanhydrangeasociety.org)

## Where Can I Get More Information About Hydrangeas?

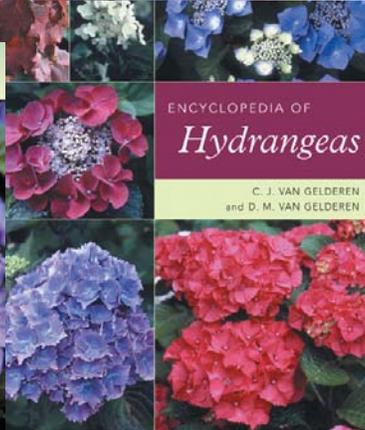
There are a number of good books available. The best & most up-to-date book comes very recently from Dr. Michael A. Dirr, *Hydrangeas for American Gardens*. It applies his 30+ years of horticultural knowledge to the genus *Hydrangea* in a very readable, opinionated & often humorous style. It builds on & acknowledges earlier works: *Hydrangeas, A Gardeners' Guide*, by Toni Lawson-Hall and Brian Rothera, 1995; *Hydrangeas*, by Glyn Church, 1999.



MICHAEL A. DIRR



HYDRANGEAS  
for American Gardens



## Best Books on Hydrangeas

### *Hydrangeas for American Gardens*

Michael A. Dirr,  
Timber Press

### *Hydrangeas, A Gardener's Guide*

Toni Lawson-Hall and Brian Rothera,  
Timber Press

### *Hydrangeas, Species and Cultivars Volume 2*

Corinne Mallet

### *Hydrangeas*

Glyn Church  
Timber Press

### *The Hydrangeas*

Michael Haworth-Booth,  
Constable and Company, Ltd. London

### *Hydrangeas*

Daria Price Bowman,  
Michael Friedman Publishing Group

## Hydrangeas on the Web ...

- [www.hydrangea.com](http://www.hydrangea.com)
- [www.hydraneasplus.com](http://www.hydraneasplus.com)
- [www.conweb.com/hydrangea](http://www.conweb.com/hydrangea)
- [www.agardenview.biz](http://www.agardenview.biz)
- [www.colorchoiceplants.com](http://www.colorchoiceplants.com)
- [www.aldridgegardens.com](http://www.aldridgegardens.com)
- [www.nantuckethydrangeas.com](http://www.nantuckethydrangeas.com)
- [www.hydrangeashydrangeas.com](http://www.hydrangeashydrangeas.com)

If you know any other interesting hydrangea websites, please share with the group!

**THE MID-SOUTH HYDRANGEA  
SOCIETY**

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Memphis, TN 38112  
E-Mail: [hydrangea@midsouth.rr.com](mailto:hydrangea@midsouth.rr.com)

**2005 Officers:**

President	Linda Lanier
Vice-President/ Program Chair	Linda Orton
Treasurer	Michelle Rogers
Membership	Caroline Brown
Annual Tour Chair	Anne Riordan

## New this Spring!

### *Hydrangea macrophylla* 'Lady in Red'



An exciting new lacecap hydrangea with exquisite red stems, petioles, and veins. Flowers bloom in late spring to summer with pinkish-white/bluish-white lacecaps (depending on soil pH) that mature to lush burgundy rose. Best if planted in part shade, this hydrangea will add three seasons of distinction to any garden. The vibrant autumn color, rich reddish-purple, also makes it a great container plant. The Lady in Red hydrangea has a compact, mounded habit, high mildew resistance and sturdy stems. It will reach 24 inches high, 36 inches wide in 3 years. Look for this exciting introduction in garden centers this spring.

