



The Mid-South Hydrangea Society In Bloom!

Volume 1, Issue 2

April 2005

From the President:

"Oh, to be in England, Now That April's There..." Well, that's where I'll be this April, though I will hate to miss our April 11 meeting with **Diane Meucci** and her Japanese Mountain Hydrangeas. If you haven't heard Diane before, you're in for a treat, as she is an avid, enthusiastic, and well-informed gardener and nurserywoman, just for a start. Joel Stout of Cricket Hill Farms in Conway, Arkansas is also attending the April meeting and will have "Lady in Red" hydrangeas for sale as well as some recently published books about hydrangeas. You'll have an opportunity to expand your garden and your library. Don't miss it, and bring a friend.

If you weren't at the Master Gardeners' *Mastering Spring Fever* event at the Agricenter on March 12, you missed something special, and the Mid-South Hydrangea Society had a charming table that was inundated with visitors requesting information on hydrangeas and our fledgling society. Caroline Brown, Linda Orton, and Anne Riordan did a great job setting up displays, and we all (including Michelle Rogers and me) enjoyed talking to everyone. We sold some hypertufa pots with plants to help pay for our booth, and made a little extra to boot! Too bad we didn't have some miniature hydrangeas (like 'Hornli') to pot up in them, but it's still a little early for those little guys to look very presentable.



At the Southeastern Flower Show in Atlanta in early March, I was able to hear Michael Dirr speak about what's in the pipeline for hydrangeas. On *arborescens* (the 'Annabelle' varieties), I wasn't aware there is a small-flowered native variety, and wonder if any of you have one. There was a beautiful photo of 'Hayes Starburst' a great grandiflora that is a double-flowered *arborescens*. I'm eager to see one of those also as I have heard about it before. But the most exciting news for me was the development of a PINK ANNABELLE, to be on the market in the next year or two. I'll definitely make room for that!



I've been scouting around my yard and excitedly discovering my hydrangeas budding out for spring. I can't wait to see those first blossoms and hope a late frost won't nip the buds. Just in case, I think I'll keep those cotton Mexican blankets (that I seem to have so many of) at the ready.

Don't forget to bring plants or other garden items for door prizes at our April meeting, or something for the refreshment table, including beverages! And think about potting up some hydrangeas for our sale in June. We want our first annual tour and sale to be the start of something great!

Let us know what you are doing in your garden, special discoveries, questions, or what you'd like to see in our newsletter. Have fun at the April meeting and I'll see you all in June.

Linda Lanier

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Hydrangeas and Companion Plants for the Shade Garden

Presented by Diane Meucci of Gardens Oyvey
April 11, 2005 — 7:00PM

As a gardener and landscape designer of 20 years, Diane Meucci recognized years ago the value of hydrangeas in the garden. She says they soften a rigid garden and fill a niche from perennials to trees. These girls are not high maintenance powder puffs . . . just beautiful and tough and Diane wouldn't have it any other way. Although she loved the *Hydrangea macrophyllas*, she soon recognized their vulnerability to late spring frosts. She noticed that the *Hydrangea serratas* seemed to provide a more reliable bloom. After many years of finding little local availability, she has located some sources of *Hydrangea serrata* and will show us a few of her 27 (twenty-seven) new serrata varieties available for purchase at her nursery. She is working on having 60 (sixty) varieties by 2006 and 2007. No more tears, just lovely blossoms.

In her presentation, Diane will discuss all the hydrangea varieties that work well in our area. She will also feature a few companions for shade gardens such as native azaleas, water features, shade shrubs and perennials.

The nursery is located at 4655 Collierville Arlington Road, Arlington, TN and is open every Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. from April 1 through June 18. Special appointments may be made with Diane to visit the nursery/gardens at other times. You may contact her at 901-867-8367 or email at diane@gardensoyvey.com



We have included in this newsletter a summary of all the hydrangea varieties we have found available through our local nurseries. Diane's many serrata varieties are listed there. A separate handout will be available at our meeting for guests to take home.

Diane has been very busy collecting and potting many varieties of perennials, trees and shrubs so make a point to drop in and see her vast selection. Oy Vey!!

Only in Tennessee By Carol Reese

"If you are a plant lover, your head will swivel as you pass the exuberant spill of flower and foliage at the entrance to Gardens Oy Vey."

Tennessee Gardener, March 2005

Welcome to the 1st Annual Mid-South Hydrangea Society Garden Tour

Saturday, June 4, 2005 9:00 AM - 12:30 PM

All Mid-south Hydrangea Society members and their guests are invited to participate in this special event. We are delighted to present two city and two country gardens for your viewing.

 9:00 AM **City Garden of Anne Riordan**
199 North Mendenhall Memphis, TN 38117

Originally the parsonage for the nearby Mullins Methodist Church, the gardens surrounding this 1/3 acre site are fashioned in the English style. Included in the garden rooms and borders are 18 varieties of mophead, lacecap, oakleaf, paniculata, and climbing hydrangea.



 10:00 AM **Country Garden of Walter Dunn**
144 Rocky Point Rd Cordova, TN 38018

Surrounded by the rapidly expanding suburb of Cordova, this 16 acre private retreat features long vistas and huge specimens of hydrangea. Special highlights include a hosta trail surrounding the house and an enchanted woodland water garden.



Alan Armitage on a "walk-about" of Anne's Riordan's Garden, May 2004

 11:00 AM **City Garden of Linda Orton**
9478 Cedar Glen Cove Cordova, TN 38016



This 1/3 acre casual cottage garden is owned by a true plant collector and includes 40 varieties each of hosta, clematis, and hydrangea. Special features include a hydrangea walk that leads to the garden entry, colorful borders, and a charming shade garden.

 NOON **Country Garden & "Gardens Oy Vey" Nursery owned by Diane Meucci & Wolfgang Marquardt**
4655 Collierville- Arlington Rd. Arlington, TN 38002

Sensational country garden featuring Japanese serrata hydrangeas, specimen trees, native plants, and moss covered trails surrounding a woodland lake. We are delighted to end our tour at this fantastic nursery. Come to see the garden and leave with ideas and the plants to make them real.



Linda Orton's Garden, Summer 2004

Hope to see you there.

Carpooling is encouraged due to limited parking.

For more information call Anne Riordan at 683-7458 or 596-6492.



Three Favorite Hydrangeas Everyone Should Have

At the Southeastern Flower Show in Atlanta, American Hydrangea Society president, Tara Dillard, was asked about her favorite plants. Tara, who is our October speaker and a garden designer, author, and television personality, says that she asks the presidents of plant societies (such as Hydrangea, Rose, Daylily, etc.) what their 3 favorite plants are and finds the best ones for her garden designs. She mentioned the following:



🌿 **Oakleaf** — “Alice” is one of the best.

🌿 **Mophead** — “Margaret Moseley” is currently the favorite in Atlanta (also zone 7). This variety is newly named for the 89-year-old Atlanta gardener who bought it from a grocery store over 52 years ago. It will be available for sale this spring (unfortunately, not yet in Memphis!). It is a white, not remountant (reblooming) Hydrangea macrophylla. But aside from its beauty, it has a *late bud set*, meaning the blooms are much less likely to be destroyed by late frosts, a big problem in the middle South. If any of you get to Atlanta this spring, grab some up and bring them back to us to share cuttings!

Also “Nikko Blue”, “Endless Summer”, or “Dooley”

🌿 **Peegee** — such as “Tardiva”, late season bloomers. Easy to form into a tree and place mopheads underneath.

🌿 **Serrata** “Purple Tiers” in particular. Okay, she mentioned 4 hydrangeas. It’s hard for hydrangea lovers to restrict themselves when selecting favorites!

By the way, if you’re interested, the 3 favorite roses she offered were ‘Marchese Bochetta’ (also found spelled as ‘Boccella’ and ‘Bocilla’), ‘Climbing Dortmund’, and ‘Old Blush’.

Tara on the Web

Check Tara’s web log, a personal online garden journal, www.agardenview.biz to see what she is doing and what is happening in her garden!

Membership Update:

Welcome to our new Mid-South Hydrangea Society members. We look forward to seeing you at future meetings and events!

Banks, Gail	Jenkins, Jean	Morgan, Julie	Smith, Claudia
Blankenship, Nancy	Johnston, Marilyn	Mowery, Julie	Thomley, Tom
Bullock, Susan	Marquardt, Wolfgang	Parker, Pam	Vogel, Joan
Cooper, Carolyn Reed	Martin, Pat	Pierce, Barbara	Wadsworth, Jill
Delany, Yvonne	McComas, Donna	Pittman, Linda	Whitlow, Tommy & Glynda
Green, Janice	Meucci, Diane	Poole, Elizabeth Prince	Wray, Mary
Hester, Marcy	Moore, Meade	Price, Elizabeth	



Hydrangea Garden Update...

On March 19, Anne Riordan and Caroline Brown joined more than 120 volunteers for the Rake, Shovel & Hoe Spring Clean Up. Of course, their efforts were directed to cleaning and pruning in the relatively new Hydrangea Garden. If you haven't seen this section of the Garden, you should definitely plan to visit. The Hydrangea Garden is east of Daffodil Hill and adjacent to the Hosta Trail, which has more than 400 hostas beautifully landscaped and maintained by the Mid-South Hosta Society.

Some of the varieties you'll see in the Hydrangea Garden:

- * *Hydrangea quercifolia* ("Snow Queen" and species)
- * *Hydrangea arborescens* ("Annabelle" and species)
- * *Hydrangea macrophylla* - Several cultivars: "Chiffon" ("Shichi Danka"), "Queen's Lace", "Mariesii", "Lanarth White", "Lemon Wave", "Blue Wave".
- * *Hydrangea serrata* ("Blue Bird", "Greyswood")
- * *Hydrangea anomala petiolaris* (climbing hydrangea)
- * *Decumaria Barbara* (native climbing hydrangea also called "Wood Vamp")

The MBG plans to build additional beds and add more varieties, so Mid-South Hydrangea Society members will have plenty of opportunities to get involved in the expansion of the Hydrangea Garden. We've added a sheet for the Hydrangea Society in the Volunteer Book at the reception desk. Just remember, if you volunteer at the MBG, any hours that you credit to the Hydrangea Society will help offset our meeting room costs.

We'll keep you updated on the progress of the Hydrangea Garden expansion!

Pink or Blue?????



If your hydrangea macrophyllas are blue and you want them to be pink or red, add **Hydrated Lime** now.

But if you want your pinks to be blue or purple, add **Aluminum Sulphate**.



Blossom colors of some varieties, such as *arborescens* (Annabelles), or *serratas*, aren't very pH sensitive and won't change colors. *Serratas* tend to give a mixture of colors that change as they age.

WHEN TO PLANT?



It's best to wait until the last chance of frost or severe heat has passed so that the plants have the best possible chance at survival. A late frost can nip the buds and reduce the number of blooms. There isn't one universal answer for planting time and it really depends on the weather. If it's over 85 degrees consistently, it's probably too warm. If temperatures are less than 40 degrees, it's probably too cold.

Good soil is important for root growth and supplying water to the hydrangea's leaf and stem structure, but most importantly the flowers. And here are some great components that can be added to improve your soil: grass clippings, clean and disease free leaves, homemade compost, well-aged manure, mushroom compost, store bought potting mix, perlite, or peat moss. Mix these into the soil in early spring a few weeks before you begin planting.

TIDBITS...

- * Hydrangeas do great in pots.
- * Clematis makes a good companion plant -- their feet are in the shade and they flower at the same time.
- * Train climbing hydrangea as a shrub. Use the older, woody stems.
- * Autumn ferns work well as they meander amongst hydrangea shrubs.
- * A flat of white impatiens or caladiums tucked in around a border of oakleaf hydrangea (*quercifolia*). It's a simple idea that goes a long way.



- * Train hydrangea *paniculata* into a tree form and underplant with other hydrangeas or shade loving plants like Lenten rose.
- * White *digitalis* (foxglove) are nice in gaps with hydrangeas. They also need some shade.
- * Chinese dogwoods are good because they flower the same time as "Annabelle" and oakleaf hydrangeas.

Thanks!

A thank you note was received from the Woodgrove Park Garden Club, along with a \$25 donation to our society. MSHS founding member **Anne Riordan** presented a program to them in February on Hydrangeas.

Thanks, Annel

Fertilizing Hydrangeas

(from hydrangeasplus.com)

If your hydrangea's leaves are lush and green but don't have any blooms, it could be that you are fertilizing too much. Hydrangeas bloom best if they are a little stressed. High nitrogen-based fertilizers can actually inhibit blooms on most varieties. Hydrangeas don't like to be overfed with fertilizers. Some hydrangea growers never feed their hydrangeas and have great blooms and healthy leaves. However, some must feed every few months to maintain a healthy plant. It really depends on your soil and the nutrients that are found naturally in your soil. Luckily hydrangeas are such wonderful plants, they will tell you what they need.

As a general rule, it is recommended fertilizing twice; early spring and early fall. Use a time-released fertilizer that released slowly (by water or temperature or both) over a 4 to 6 month period. The general blend that yields 10-10-10 or 16-16-16 is all you need. There is no need to run out and buy a special fertilizer for every variety of plant in the garden. This particular mix is great for everything.

There are some fertilizers just for acid loving plants available on the market. These are a great instant boost for plants but tend to be very high in nitrogen and may actually inhibit the ability of the plant to bloom. Too much nitrogen and the plant will focus on stems and roots – which is not a bad thing. However, you bought these plants to bloom so there needs to be a balance.

What do your hydrangeas need in terms of fertilizing? The three essential components of fertilizer are nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium, the N-P-K numbers. Nitrogen (N) is for healthy green growth by helping the plant to grow chlorophyll. Fertilizer high in nitrogen like 25-10-10 is great for greening up your lawn. Phosphorus (P) helps a plant grow good roots and stems in the early growth season and then in flower production.



We can only hope!

A mix like 10-30-10 is great for flowers on your annuals and perennials. The Potassium (K) helps your plants generate and process nutrients. Other important elements in fertilizers are calcium, magnesium, iron, copper, manganese, zinc, and sulfur. Organic fertilizers are usually very low in these trace elements.

For blue hydrangeas, a low phosphorus element (the P) is important as too much will limit the plant's ability to absorb aluminum. The amounts of sulfur (which lowers pH) and calcium (raises pH) are important to keep the blue color. A good soil test can tell you what is missing from your soil.

Our recommended use for these instant fertilizers is for emergencies only. In May or June (depending on your area) hydrangeas begin to set bud and grow very quickly. The hydrangea will begin absorbing nutrients from the soil at a very rapid pace. If your soil doesn't have enough nutrients, hydrangeas may get yellowing leaves on the inside parts of the plant. This is a perfect time for the instant fertilizer when the hydrangea needs it most.

**THE MID-SOUTH HYDRANGEA
SOCIETY**

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2005 Officers:

President	Linda Lanier llanier1@midsouth.rr.com 452-4667
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Membership	Caroline Brown ckbrown@fedex.com 683-9766
Annual Tour Chair	Anne Riordan mailmanann@bellsouth.net 683-7458

Mark your calendar...



April 11: Mid-South Hydrangea Society meeting
7pm at the Botanic Garden.
Presentation by Diane Meucci
of Gardens Oy Vey

June 4: 1st Annual Mid-South Hydrangea Society
Garden Tour

October 1: Mid-South Hydrangea Society meeting
Botanic Garden—Time to be announced
Presentation by Tara Dillard, President
American Hydrangea Society