



Why are my hydrangeas not blooming?

We want to share some information that may help answer a few questions for your customers. Here are some steps that consumers in cooler northern climates can take to help ensure better bloom production on their hydrangeas.

Location

In Northern climates, the location of your hydrangea in the garden will have a large impact on bloom production. The farther north you are, the more sun your plants need and can tolerate. In zones 4-5a plant your Hydrangeas in a location that enables them to receive at least 6 hours of sun with some dappled shade in the afternoon.

Pruning

Stop cutting plants to the ground, most if not all of the flower buds on old wood are being removed. Endless Summer Hydrangeas and many of the other newer re blooming types certainly do bloom on new wood, but it may take longer for flower buds to develop on the new growth of a young plant. If the plant blooms only on old wood you are certainly trimming off the flower buds for next year. Try instead to trim in the spring, only to trim dead branching or to shape the plant. Once the plant begins to bloom deadhead and trim to maintain the shape.

Winter Cover

Protection for plants in the first few years is important, as is protection from spring freezes. Since Hydrangea buds emerge early in spring, late freezes may damage bud development as well as any new growth. Keeping the crown of plants covered with mulch through May helps protect these buds and any soft new growth from late spring freezes. Be sure to use loose composted mulch. You also need to watch that the material does not stay wet to avoid rotting the plant. You can use burlap and or cones manufactured for early spring frost protection.

Fertilizing

The first thing all gardeners should do is a soil test to give you a good starting point. Fertilization is an important factor in flower production of Hydrangeas. A good quality, slow-release fertilizer applied once in spring or early summer should be sufficient. If you over-feed your hydrangeas, the effect is usually dark green leaf production with fewer flower buds. In the North (zones 4-5) it is recommended not to fertilize after August 15th, as plants need to slow down and acclimate for winter.

Changing Flower Color

The first step is to learn the pH of your soil. Purchasing a test kit from your garden center will help to get you on the right track.

**Changing flowers from blue to pink you need to change from an acid soil to an alkaline one. (pH of about 6.0 to 6.2) Many soils in North America are naturally alkaline already and will produce pink blooms with no extra effort required.*

**Changing flowers to Blue by lowering the pH of your soil with a pH level of about 5.2-5.5. Using a soil acidifier will lower your soil's pH for beautiful blue blooms.*

Watering

The amount you water is a factor you can regulate to ensure beautiful blooms. Although Hydrangeas are named after "Hydra", Greek for water, your hydrangeas will form large leaves, lots of green growth and few flower buds if over-watered. Over-watering may slow the formation of flowers considerably. It's normal for plants to wilt for a short time in the heat of the day. You're better off to water well and less often, than giving a little all the time.