

WHY WON'T MY HYDRANGEA FLOWER

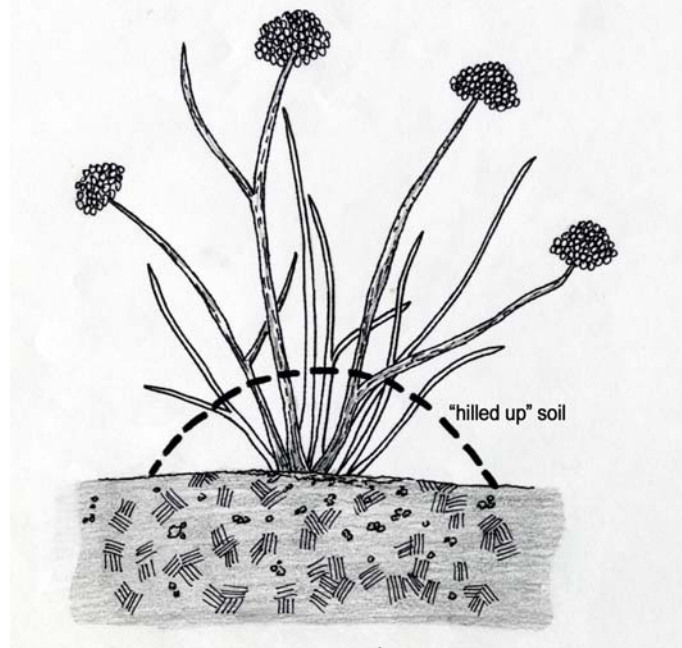
These lovely flowering shrubs have a tendency not to flower when certain situations present themselves. Although hardy, many Hydrangeas flower only on second year wood. Woody stems that have buds preserved from the previous growing season will bare flowers for the following season. With our temperamental winters, these hydrangeas act as herbaceous perennials where the stems produced this season may die down to the ground and only flush new growth directly from the root. The most difficult Hydrangeas to flower are the macrophylla and serrata varieties. These are the colourful mop-head or lace-cap flowers that change colour due to pH levels in the soil.

The trick to promoting consistent flowering is to protect the stems from sudden quick frosts and from harsh winters. We recommend hilling up the base of the Hydrangea with heavy black earth or topsoil. This insulates the branches at the crown, therefore protecting the stems from any bud loss. Hill up the base of the Hydrangea in late fall when temperatures are consistently cooler and do not prune any branches. Mound the soil around the base of the plant, 6 to 8 inches high, and water well to compact lightly so that the soil will not wash or blow away. You may use a rose collar or plastic fencing to help secure the soil over the long winter months.

Once consistent warmer temperatures develop in early spring, it is time to remove the soil. When there is no longer threat of heavy, sudden frosts, spread the hilled up soil evenly around the base away from the center crown below to allow the stems and buds to emerge. Once these buds develop new stems, pruning can be done to remove any branches that have died over winter.

Fertilizing will also promote flowering once the buds begin to swell and develop into new branches come spring. We recommend using Plant Prod's Tree and Shrub 28-14-14 fertilizer to help aid new stem growth and flowering. During the spring and throughout the summer use So-Green's Aluminum Sulphate in weekly intervals. Use until desired colour is achieved.

As shown here, mound the soil at least 6-8 inches at the base of the plant in late fall to protect the stems and crown over winter.



For more information about hardy Hydrangeas please print a care sheet from our website.