

Hydrangea quercifolia Oakleaf Hydrangea¹

Edward F. Gilman²

Introduction

Oak-leaved Hydrangea has 8 to 12-inch-long leaves shaped like oak leaves (Fig. 1). They are borne on stiff, upright, hairy stems which occasionally branch. A fuller shrub can be created by pinching the new growth or cutting back old growth. The plant grows in sun or shade and prefers a rich, moist soil. In the northern part of its range, the top usually dies back during the winter and it needs shelter from high winds. Oak-Leaved Hydrangea transplants easily and has a very coarse texture and good red fall color. This sprawling, slow-growing shrub reaches 6 to 10 feet tall and spreads three to five feet. The flowers, produced in midsummer in panicles, are at first white, then fade to pink and then tan. If you wish to prune this Hydrangea to create a dense shrub, do so after it flowers so you can enjoy the spectacular flower display.

General information

Scientific name: *Hydrangea quercifolia*

Pronunciation: hye-DRAN-jee-uh
kwur-sif-FOLE-ee-uh

Common name(s): Oak-Leaf Hydrangea

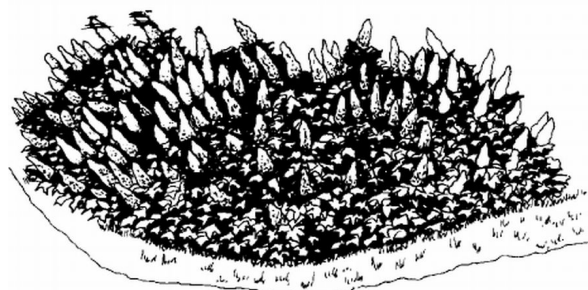


Figure 1. Oak-Leaf Hydrangea.

Family: *Saxifragaceae*

Plant type: shrub

USDA hardiness zones: 5B through 9 (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 7: year round

1. This document is FPS-259, one of a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Original publication date October, 1999. Reviewed May, 2007. Visit the EDIS Web Site at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.

2. Edward F. Gilman, professor, Environmental Horticulture Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, 32611

Planting month for zone 8: year round

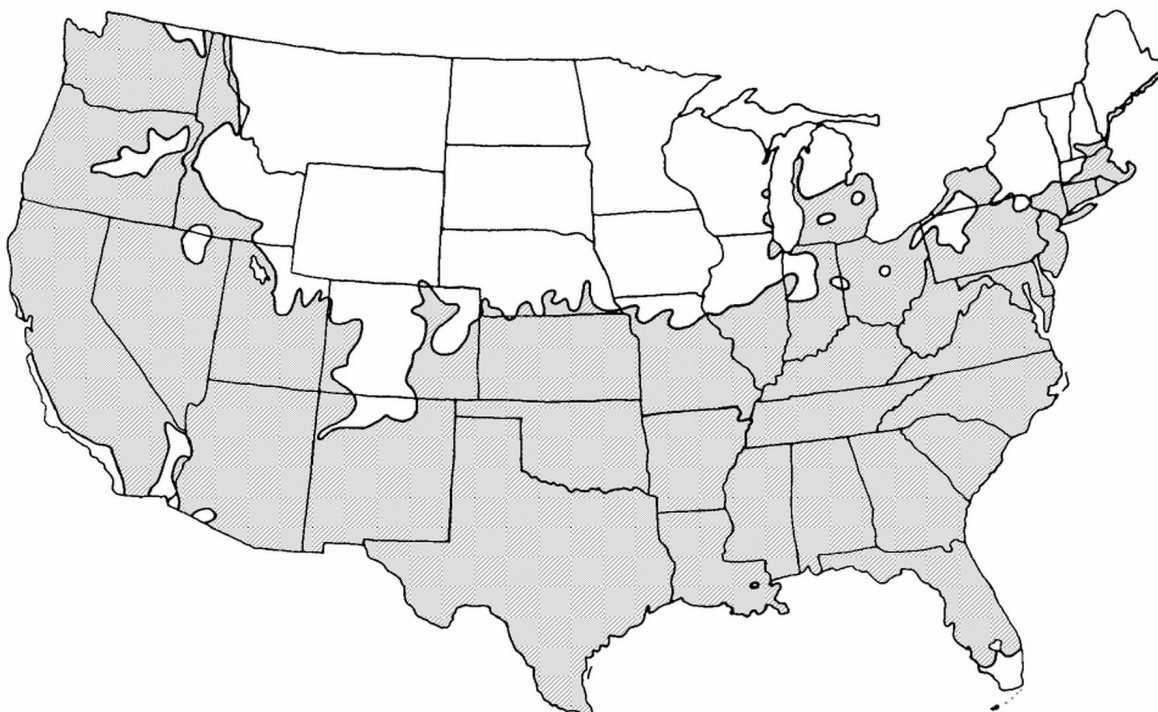


Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Planting month for zone 9: year round

Origin: native to Florida

Uses: mass planting; specimen; screen; accent

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

Description

Height: 6 to 10 feet

Spread: 6 to 8 feet

Plant habit: upright; round

Plant density: moderate

Growth rate: fast

Texture: coarse

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: ciliate; serrate

Leaf shape: ovate

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: deciduous

Leaf blade length: 8 to 12 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: purple

Fall characteristic: showy

Flower

Flower color: pink

Flower characteristic: summer flowering; spring flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval

Fruit length: less than .5 inch

Fruit cover: dry or hard

Fruit color: brown

Fruit characteristic: persists on the plant

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: not particularly showy; typically multi-trunked or clumping stems

Current year stem/twig color: brown

Current year stem/twig thickness: thick



Figure 3. Foliage of Oak-Leaf Hydrangea

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in full sun

Soil tolerances: occasionally wet; clay; sand; acidic; slightly alkaline; loam

Drought tolerance: moderate

Soil salt tolerances: poor

Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other

Roots: sprouts from roots or lower trunk

Winter interest: plant has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers

Outstanding plant: plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

Pest resistance: no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

Use and Management

Because of their size, most residential landscapes only need one or two of these plants. Especially attractive at the edge of woods or other natural settings, Oak-Leaf Hydrangea likes fertile, acid, well-drained soil, and requires no attention once it becomes established. It makes a nice accent in a shrub border or growing out of a ground cover.

Available cultivars include: 'Snow Queen', large, pure white blooms maturing to pink; 'Snow Flake', large double flowers; and 'Harmony' with 12-inch-long, heavy white flower clusters.

Propagation is by seed, cuttings, or separation of the suckers which develop at the base of the plant.

Pest and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.