Hydrangea quercifolia
Edward F. Gilman

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: hi-DRAN-je-uh kwur-sif-FOLE-ee-uh  
Common name(s): Oak-Leaf Hydrangea  
Family: Saxifragaceae  
Plant type: shrub  
USDA hardiness zones: 5B through 9 (Fig. 2)  
Planting month for zone 7: year round  
Planting month for zone 8: year round  
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

Figure 1. Oak-Leaf Hydrangea.

Description

Height: 6 to 10 feet  
Spread: 6 to 8 feet  
Plant habit: upright; round  
Plant density: moderate  
Growth rate: fast  
Texture: coarse
Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**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

**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

October 1999
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.

**Pests and Diseases**

No pests or diseases are of major concern.