**Hydrangea paniculata**
Panicle Hydrangea

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson

**INTRODUCTION**

This low-branching, multiple-trunked tree or large shrub is fast-growing and capable of reaching 15 to 25 feet in height with a spread of 10 to 20 feet but is often seen at about 10 feet (Fig. 1). The dark green, deciduous leaves are three to six inches long and 1.5 to 3 inches wide, and fade only to a sickly yellow in fall before dropping. The spectacular summertime blooms appear in six to eight-inch-long panicles, the cream-colored flowers gradually fading over time to purplish-pink. The upright, spreading branches often bend down with the weight of the blooms, and the brown, faded blooms should be removed in late September to keep the tree from looking unkempt. If unpruned some people object to the pinkish brown fruits and old flowers which hang on to the tree during the winter. Pruning also is suggested to keep the plant to a consistent, neat shape.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

Scientific name: Hydrangea paniculata  
Pronunciation: high-DRAN-jee-uh  
pan-ick-yoo-LAY-tuh  
Common name(s): Panicle Hydrangea  
Family: Hydrangeaceae  
USDA hardiness zones: 4 through 8A (Fig. 2)  
Origin: not native to North America  
Uses: container or above-ground planter; hedge; near a deck or patio; screen; trainable as a standard; specimen; no proven urban tolerance  
Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree

**DESCRIPTION**

Height: 15 to 25 feet  
Spread: 10 to 20 feet  
Crown uniformity: irregular outline or silhouette  
Crown shape: vase shape  
Crown density: moderate  
Growth rate: medium  
Texture: coarse

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite; whorled (Fig. 3)  
Leaf type: simple  
Leaf margin: serrate

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Leaf shape: elliptic (oval); ovate
Leaf venation: bowed; banchidodrome; pinnate
Leaf type and persistence: deciduous
Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches; 2 to 4 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: yellow
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower
Flower color: white
Flower characteristics: summer flowering; very showy

Fruit
Fruit shape: elongated; oval
Fruit length: .5 to 1 inch
Fruit covering: dry or hard
Fruit color: brown; pink
Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; no significant litter problem; showy

Trunk and Branches
Trunk/bark/branches: droop as the tree grows, and will require pruning for vehicular or pedestrian clearance beneath the canopy; routinely grown with, or trainable to be grown with, multiple trunks; not particularly showy; no thorns
Pruning requirement: requires pruning to develop strong structure
Breakage: susceptible to breakage either at the crotch due to poor collar formation, or the wood itself is weak and tends to break
Current year twig color: brown; gray
Current year twig thickness: thick

Culture
Light requirement: tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in full sun
Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; acidic; alkaline; well-drained
Drought tolerance: moderate
Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem

**Winter interest:** no special winter interest  
**Outstanding tree:** tree has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more  
**Invasive potential:** little, if any, potential at this time  
**Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** not known to be susceptible  
**Pest resistance:** very sensitive to one or more pests or diseases which can affect tree health or aesthetics

**USE AND MANAGEMENT**

Panicle Hydrangea can be used in a shrub border as a large sized accent shrub. It may be best to locate it away from the house due to its large size and spreading habit. Lower branches can be pruned to clean up the bottom of the plant and make it grow into a multi-stemmed tree. Early training can create a single-stemmed small tree which would be well suited for planting as a specimen in a low ground cover or lawn area. They are also suited for planting in above-ground containers for displaying the nice flowers which develop in the summer.

Panicle Hydrangea should be grown in full sun or partial shade on well-drained, moist, loamy soil. Plants are fuller in the sun.

Propagation is by softwood cuttings which root quickly in a medium of sand and peat.

**Pests**

Aphids, rose chafer, oystershell scale, two-spotted mites, and nematodes.

**Diseases**

Bacterial wilt, bud blight, leaf spot, powdery mildew, and rust.

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Figure 3. Foliage of Panicle Hydrangea.