

## *Hydrangea quercifolia*

### Oakleaf Hydrangea

This is one of the most handsome plants that landscape designers have at their disposal, but it is not utilized to its fullest potential in American gardens. The full, rounded-mounded outline, lobed leaves, and magnificent white flowers provide full measure for the landscape dollar. The dark green, three- to seven-lobed leaves, 3 to 8 in. long and wide, turn rich burgundy in fall and may persist into December. The 4- to 12-in.-long, panicle inflorescences are composed of 1- to 1½-in.-diameter, showy sepals interspersed with fertile flowers. The flowers open in June and last for three to four weeks, often developing purplish pink coloration with age. The bark peels off in papery, light brown to cinnamon-brown strips. Provide moist, acid, organic-laden, well-drained soils, in full sun to partial shade. Easily transplanted from a container or the field.

Grows rapidly if ample moisture and fertilizer are provided. Use in mass plantings, groupings, or the border. One of the best landscape plants for use at the edge of woodlands. Grows 4 to 6 (to 8) ft. high, equal or greater in spread. Zones 5 to 9. Georgia to Florida and Mississippi.

**Cultivars and Varieties.** 'Alice' produces 10- to 14-in.-long inflorescences composed of half-dollar sized sepals that age to rosy pink. Grows 12 ft. high and wide.

'Alison' is a large, robust, mounded form with large, leathery leaves and 10- to 12-in.-long inflorescences. Develops superior brilliant red to reddish purple fall color. Grows 8 to 10 ft. high, 10 to 14 ft. wide.

'Harmony' and 'Roanoke' have large, mostly sterile inflorescences, up to 12 in. long, so heavy as to cause the branches to arch.

'Pee Wee' is a dwarfish, broad-mounded form, with leaves and flowers about half the size of those of the species.

'Snowflake', always a favorite, has multiple sepals emerging on top of the older ones, creating a double-flowered appearance. The large, 12- to 15-in.-long inflorescences may cause the branches to arch, although usually not to the degree of 'Harmony' and 'Roanoke'.

'Snow Queen' was only a photograph in a nursery catalog to me until the real thing flowered at the local botanical garden. What a beauty. Large, showy white sepals cover the fertile flowers, producing an 8-in.-long cone of white. The inflorescences are not as large as those of the previous cultivars and they remain upright. Fall color is potent red with a hint of burgundy. May prove more compact in habit than the others.



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