

Bobby & Lynn's Plant Farm

REAL PLANTS. REAL PEOPLE. REAL PASSION.

Hydrangea Problem-Solving Guide

Mobile-friendly fillable edition

A practical guide to common hydrangea problems and what to do next.

Start here before treating the plant

Most hydrangea problems are caused by stress, timing, weather, watering, pruning, or growing conditions rather than a serious disease. Use this guide to slow down, check the basics, and make notes before you start cutting, fertilizing, or spraying.

Plant name:

Date:

Hydrangea type, if known:

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Bigleaf

☐

Panicle

☐

Oakleaf

☐

Smooth

☐

Climbing

☐

Not sure

Five things to check first

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Soil moisture 2-3 inches deep

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Hot afternoon sun or reflected heat

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Recent pruning or deadheading

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Late freeze damage on new growth

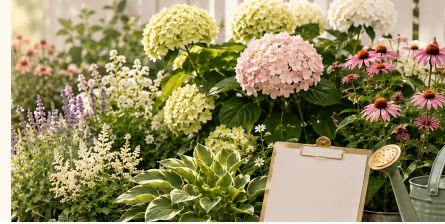
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Drainage problems or mulch against stems

Phone tip: If this PDF opens in your browser, tap Share and choose Open in Adobe Acrobat or Save to Files before typing.

Bloom and Water Stress

No blooms, wilting, and brown leaf edges



No blooms

Likely causes:

Pruned at the wrong time; late freeze; too much shade; or excess nitrogen fertilizer.

What to do next:

Know your type first. Old-wood hydrangeas should be pruned just after flowering. Protect early growth from late freezes and avoid high-nitrogen lawn fertilizer near the plant.

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I checked this / this may apply

Notes

Wilting or drooping

Likely causes:

Heat stress, dry soil, damaged roots, or normal afternoon droop during very hot weather.

What to do next:

Check soil 2-3 inches deep before watering. Water slowly at the root zone when dry. Add 2-3 inches of mulch, but keep it off the stems.

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I checked this / this may apply

Notes

Brown leaf edges

Likely causes:

Hot afternoon sun, drought stress, fertilizer burn, or salt buildup in the soil.

What to do next:

Provide afternoon shade when possible, water deeply, and pause fertilizer. Flush the soil with plain water if overfertilizing is suspected.

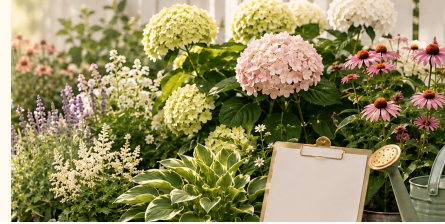
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I checked this / this may apply

Notes

Leaf Problems

Yellow leaves, leaf spots, and white powder



Yellow leaves

Likely causes:

Poor drainage, overwatering, nutrient imbalance, or naturally aging lower leaves.

What to do next:

Check drainage first. Let soggy soil dry slightly. If yellowing continues, test the soil before adding fertilizer or iron.

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I checked this / this may apply

Notes

Leaf spots

Likely causes:

Fungal or bacterial leaf spot encouraged by wet foliage, poor air circulation, and crowded plantings.

What to do next:

Remove badly affected leaves, clean up fallen debris, water at soil level, and avoid crowding. Do not compost diseased leaves.

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I checked this / this may apply

Notes

White powder on leaves

Likely causes:

Powdery mildew, often worse with humidity, shade, and limited air movement.

What to do next:

Improve airflow, avoid overhead watering, and remove heavily affected leaves. Treat only if the problem is spreading or severe.

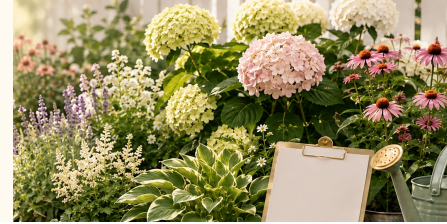
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I checked this / this may apply

Notes

Flowers and New Plant Stress

Brown blooms, transplant shock, and when to ask for help



Flowers turn brown early

Likely causes:

Heat, drought, direct afternoon sun, or normal aging of the blooms.

What to do next:

Keep moisture even, add mulch, and give afternoon shade when possible. Old flowers can be deadheaded above a healthy set of leaves.

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I checked this / this may apply

Notes

Plant looks weak after planting

Likely causes:

Transplant shock, root disturbance, inconsistent watering, or planting too deeply.

What to do next:

Keep the root ball evenly moist, skip heavy fertilizer, and confirm the top of the root ball is level with or slightly above the soil line.

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I checked this / this may apply

Notes

When to get more help

Seek local Extension guidance when stems show cankers, the plant declines rapidly, roots smell rotten, or symptoms keep spreading after growing conditions are corrected. Take clear photos of the whole plant, leaves, stems, and soil area.

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Stems show cankers or black sunken areas

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Plant declines quickly

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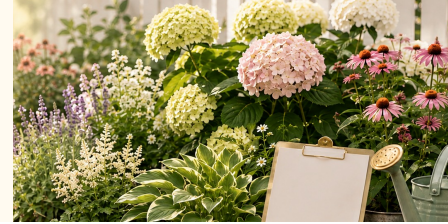
Roots smell rotten

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Symptoms keep spreading after care is corrected

My Hydrangea Action Plan

Use this page to track what you checked and what you plan to do



What I noticed

What I will try next

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Check soil before watering | ☐ Give afternoon shade |
| ☐ Water deeply at root zone | ☐ Stop fertilizer for now |
| ☐ Add or adjust mulch | ☐ Confirm hydrangea type |

Follow-up notes

Keep it simple

Hydrangeas usually respond best to steady care: the right light, even moisture, good drainage, and careful pruning. Avoid making several big changes at once. Make one adjustment, give the plant time, and keep notes so you know what helped.