

## Cobb County Extension Service Horticulture

### PeeGee Hydrangea (*Hydrangea paniculata*) – The Sun-loving Hydrangea

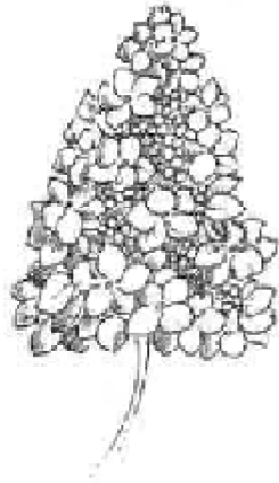


*PeeGee Hydrangea in bloom*

Love hydrangeas but think you have too much sun to grow them? There is a hydrangea for you, and it's a wonderful, carefree shrub that can be grown successfully by most anybody. It's called the PeeGee hydrangea. It's an old-fashioned plant that is coming into new favor. You may have seen it in the yard of an old farmhouse where the owners might have called it a "Snowball Bush." It's not a true Snowball Bush - that's probably more correctly a Japanese Snowball Viburnum, which blooms in the spring - but who cares? It certainly looks like a Snowball Bush!

It's a great performer, too. Unfussy about soil (except wet), its only requirement is full sun. It has few to no pest problems. And it blooms on new wood (wood grown during the current growing season), so it is not susceptible to the frost-nipped blooms of French or Bigleaf Hydrangeas (*Hydrangea macrophylla*). You can prune it back severely around the first of March (6-12" high) and produce a smaller plant with larger blooms, or you can just forget it and produce a larger plant with many smaller blooms. Young plants will probably benefit by pruning the first two to three seasons to produce a more compact plant. Over a period of thirty years or more, unpruned PeeGee hydrangeas can turn into small trees, growing to 15 to 25 feet high by 10 to 20 feet wide.

The blooms of the PeeGee hydrangea are described as "panicles," meaning that they are more roughly cone-shaped than the "mophead" blooms of the French hydrangea. A typical panicle-shaped bloom is illustrated below:



*Illustration by Cobb Master Gardener Electa Keil*

However, there are many varieties with head shapes varying from quite rounded to very pointed (see the picture of the 'Tardiva' variety at the end of this article). The blooms typically start out a pleasing pale green, ripen to a creamy white, then as they fade, turn shades of truly lovely rose pink and rust - all over a period of some two months, starting in late July.

There are many varieties of PeeGee Hydrangea, all lovely in their own right. You may see pictures of several of these at [www.hydrangea.com](http://www.hydrangea.com). Some that you might want to look for are:

Grandiflora (probably the one pictured above; it was not identified)

***Pink Diamond***

***Unique***

***Floribunda***

***Chantilly***

***Tardiva (pictured below; a later blooming variety)***



***Hydrangea paniculata 'Tardiva'***  
***pruned into a standard (tree) form.***

*Photographs by Michele Browne, 7/03.*

***By Michele Browne***

***horticulture program assistant***

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