

## Virtual Hortlandia 2020

### Hydrangeas Plus

[www.hydrangeasplus.com](http://www.hydrangeasplus.com)

This week Joanne Fuller talked with Kristin VanHoose at Hydrangeas Plus and edited the conversation for this article.

#### *Kristin, what are some of your favorite plants?*

I love Hydrangea serrata the most. H. serrata 'Maiko' is a very good petite mophead with interesting red tinged foliage that turns deep burgundy in the fall. The blooms are Ph sensitive so they are blue in our acid soil. I also like Hydrangea paniculata 'Web'. It has very full blooms and can take full sun here. The blooms develop from white to blush pink in fall. It also holds the blooms up better than Hydrangea paniculata grandiflora. In oakleaf hydrangeas, I like Hydrangea quercifolia 'Harmony' with very full blooms. The leaves are wider than typical oakleaf hydrangeas, and it has the characteristic 'exfoliating' bark.

#### *What do you think about the yellow leaved hydrangeas?*

They can help bring color to a lightly shaded situation. Hydrangea 'Golden Sunlight' starts out very very yellow then turns a bit more green as the leaves age. It's a lace cap. Pretty new to the trade, it may be smallish and good for smaller gardens. I also like Hydrangea 'Summer Frost'. The literature says it starts out green and then turns cream-- but that comes from East Coast gardeners, here it turns yellow. If you are looking for a yellow leaved oakleaf hydrangea, Hydrangea 'Little Honey' is a good choice. It is a small shrub with very yellow leaves in sun. Like other oak leaf hydrangeas, it has good fall color and winter interest. It's hard to find because we have had trouble keeping it alive in pots in the nursery, but once it is in the ground it does fine. It doesn't like wet feet-- like many oakleaf hydrangeas.

#### *How did you and your husband come to own Hydrangeas Plus?*

It's actually a romantic story. My husband David and I saw an advertisement for the nursery in the Oregonian in February 1999. So, on Sunday, February 14, 1999, we drove out to look at the property. Terri and Art Bell who started the nursery showed us around. We fell in love with the site and the nursery and closed the sale by June 1st. David was a computer guy and I was a financial analyst. We were ready to do something different with our lives, but our friends and family thought we were crazy. We got the nursery on the web for online sales just as online selling was beginning -- we expanded the stock from 60 different varieties to over 300 available today. In the first years, the Bells continued to give us advice, and today we still love what we are doing.

#### *All my hydrangeas that are supposed to be pink or red turn blue over time or at best purple, is this the PH sensitive thing?*

That is because our soil tends to be acid, and acid soils make hydrangea blooms turn blue. Alkaline soils turn hydrangeas pink. Hydrangeas are unique among plants in their ability to indicate soil acidity. There is a great science geeky article by this guy, Henry Schreiber, who has been working on the chemistry of hydrangeas and playing around with color.

<https://www.americanscientist.org/article/curious-chemistry-guides-hydrangea-colors>

#### *Do you try to change the color of your hydrangeas?*

Mostly I let them be blue. But I like Hydrangea macrophylla 'Sebrina' which is one of the Dutch Ladies Series. I put egg shells and ashes from the fireplace in the soil underneath the plant. The foliage is dark as it emerges, and the flowers are full mopheads-- white with pink edges.

### ***What about hydrangeas that are supposed to be red flowered?***

In my soil, I find that reds make the best purples.

### ***What other plants do you like?***

I like lots of clematis, and I buy them from the Rogerson Clematis Collection anytime we are vendors together at a sale. I use a lot of epimediums and hellebores under the hydrangeas because they look their best when the hydrangeas just look like sticks. I also grow sun perennials like agapanthus-- love their blue with the blue of the hydrangeas.

### ***How can people shop at Hydrangeas Plus right now?***

Now is the best time to plant hydrangeas, so I would really encourage folks to shop and plant now. We have four greenhouses full of plants that people can walk through and shop safely. We are open by appointment shopping from 10 am - 4 pm. The request form is at [www.hydrangeasplus.com](http://www.hydrangeasplus.com) . We are also doing plant pick-up, using the form on the web to schedule. If you come and pick-up plants you will pay less than the price listed on the website because those prices include the cost of boxing up the plants for shipping. I also have a list of plants that are too large to ship and need new homes now. Customers can email me for that list at [kristin@hydrangeasplus.com](mailto:kristin@hydrangeasplus.com).

And, we are always open for mail order at [www.hydrangeasplus.com](http://www.hydrangeasplus.com).