

# *In The Garden*

## Hooray For Hydrangeas

(NAPSA)—A garden filled with billowy hydrangea blossoms can be very popular. These classic blooms have been gracing the pages of glossy magazines and tantalizing gardeners for decades. The problem is they've been labeled as difficult to grow.

The truth is hydrangeas have been given a bad rap. They're actually quite simple to grow when you choose an easygoing variety. Luckily, breeders love these plants, too, and more and more gardener-friendly selections are being offered each year. One of the most reliable is 'Limelight.'

This hardy variety flourishes in full sun or part shade with very little effort. It's truly a standout with large (6- to 12-inch-long), robust, lime-green blooms that mature to white then turn pink and burgundy. Sometimes all four colors are present at one time. Perhaps better yet, the flowers form on the current season's growth. That means you don't have to worry about harsh weather zapping your flower buds and robbing you of a spectacular display, as is the case with many other varieties.

Because 'Limelight' is so easygoing and adaptable, soil conditions do not completely alter the flower color, which is also the case of other hydrangeas, although fertile soils will produce more-intense colors. If your soil is poor



**A border of beautiful hydrangea blooms along a walkway can be a step in the right direction—and easier to create than many realize.**

or lean, an annual dose of fertilizer in spring will boost the color.

With 'Limelight' you don't have to be intimidated by pruning either. Because it really doesn't require much attention, you don't have to pull out the shears very often. In early spring, plants benefit from a little freshening up by thinning out older stems before the leaves appear. The only other time you may want to make a cut is to remove deadheads or harvest fresh blooms for bouquets or dried flower arrangements. The flowers are excellent for table centerpieces. To keep good color in dried hydrangea blooms, simply cut them when they're slightly past their peak and let them dry in a vase of water.

In the garden, 'Limelight' shines in the mixed border with other shrubs and perennials. Blue Mist Shrub, Butterfly Bush, Joe-Pye weed and ornamental grasses all make great companions. At 6 to 8 feet tall and wide, 'Limelight' makes an excellent seasonal screen along the driveway or backyard property line. It is also well suited for foundation beds or massing.

If you have always dreamed of a picture-book hydrangea planting, don't wait another season or believe all the difficulty rumors. 'Limelight' is an easy-to-grow hydrangea and is readily available at most retail garden centers. To find one nearby, visit [www.colorchoiceplants.com](http://www.colorchoiceplants.com).