

## Lael's Moon Garden Nursery

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**From:** "Lael's Moon Garden Nursery" <laelsmoon@msn.com>  
**To:** "Bethany Lael" <laelsmoon@msn.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 01, 2009 7:10 PM  
**Subject:** Hydrangeas, Garden Tours, Plant Sale and Autumn in the Country



# Lael's Moon Garden

## Greetings Fellow Gardeners:

Finally some cooler weather so we can play in our gardens again!

I am in awe of people like Dan Hinkley who have the time, energy and knowledge (not to mention money) to travel to the four corners of the world observing rare plants in their native habitats and introducing them to horticulture. My admiration is not diminished by the fact that he writes a little like Frazier Crane talks. My own study of horticulture has consisted of going on "kicks" where I try to learn as much as I can about a particular genus that piques my interest until I get jaded with it and move on to another. Over time, this has given me knowledge of lots of groups of plants with vast chasms of ignorance in between.

When I first got interested in hydrangeas, I have to admit I considered the ones I had seen to be kind of "grandma plants" not worth a place in my garden. Then one day at the Washington Park Arboretum I ran into a magnificent hydrangea *aspera* in peak flower and a new "kick" was born. Maybe it was the hydrangea and maybe it was the fact that I am now a grandpa, but I fell in love. Since then, Bethany and I have scoured wholesale nurseries and botanical gardens to find beautiful hydrangeas for Lael's Moon Garden and some of our favorites are described below.



**Hydrangea aspera** has stunning lace cap flowers of soft purple with stark white sterile florets surrounding them. The plant has large, dark green fuzzy leaves and the flowers

extend above the leaves giving it a distinctive look. (A friend called it the Hydrangea from Mars.) This is a large shrub growing to eight feet tall and wide. Afternoon shade is a must; it will sunburn in hot sun.



**Hydrangea macrophylla "Oregon Pride"** is a stunner. It has dark burgundy stems and strong pink mop head flowers. But there's more! In our slightly acid soil it has a variety of flower colors all on one plant. Some flowers are the expected strong pink, some are a vibrant purple and some are shades in between. The combination just blows me (and most other people) away, but one customer told me, "I'd rather have one that isn't confused." I could probably make all the flowers purple with an application of aluminum sulphate, but I really enjoy the variety of colors. Grows to about 5' x 5' and for us does best in afternoon shade.

**Hydrangea macrophylla "Pia"** is dwarf with strong pink mop head flowers with white centers. Perfect for the smaller garden or a container. It probably could be turned purple with application of aluminum sulphate. (I'll have to try that!) Afternoon shade to about 3'.

**Hydrangea macrophylla "Ayesha"** is a light pink mop head with cupped, thickened petals that give the flowers the appearance of pink popcorn -- beautifully unusual. It may not bloom until established, but it is well worth the wait. It will become a medium size shrub 5-6' tall and wide and likes partial to bright shade.



**Hydrangea macrophylla "Endless Summer"** (the original) has traditional mop head flowers and its

claim to fame is that it blooms on old and new wood so it can be pruned whenever without sacrificing the next year's flowers (not true of many hydrangeas macrophylla.) The color may be baby blue or pink depending on acid or alkaline soil. Grows to 5' x 4' and likes partial to bright shade.

**Hydrangea macrophylla x serrata "Preziosa" or "Pink Beauty"** Mophead blooms begin in late June and continue through summer, in an ever changing color display. Soft shades of pale-lavender, blue or pink, change to rose with purple tints and shades of burgundy. The leaves also change from bright green to burgundy "Preziosa" grows to 5' tall and wide in 10 years and does best in partial to bright shade.

**Hydrangea paniculata "Quickfire"** has large panicles of white flowers that turn pink as they age. It blooms on new wood and earlier than most other hydrangeas. It can be grown in full sun to part-shade as a single-trunked tree or a multiple-trunked shrub. Every branch ends in a large a panicle of flowers, so when the plant goes dormant in the fall, the individual limbs should be pruned back to two sets of buds on the current year's growth. This will cause the limbs to branch resulting in even more flowers the next year. Ultimate size is 6-8' tall and 3-5' wide.



**Hydrangea paniculata "Pink Diamond"** is similar to "Quickfire" above. It has beautiful and fragrant white flowers fading to pink and the winter pruning is the same. It is also tolerant of full- to half-day sun. We offer this one already trained as a single-trunked tree that will grow to 6-8'. This is a sun tolerant hydrangea and will grow in full sun (with adequate water) to part-shade. Tree forms should be pruned hard when young to develop strong stems.



**Hydrangea quercifolia "Snow Queen" and "Pee Wee"** both have heavily textured leaves reminiscent of an oak leaf and panicles of white flowers held prominently above the foliage. "Pee Wee" grows to about three feet and "Snow Queen" reaches about six. Both are slow growers that benefit from cutting back when they are young to make them branch. The leaves of both have nice burgundy to red fall color and persist well into winter. Sun or part shade.

**Hydrangea anomala "Miranda"** is a climbing vine that at first glance looks like the plain green hydrangea anomala petiolaris commonly available, but it has subtly variegated foliage. It can be grown as a deciduous ground cover, staked to be a small contorted shrub, or allowed to climb a tree trunk (the bigger the tree the better). It's slow to establish, but magnificent once it gets going. The flowers are white lace cap in late spring. Partial shade is best.

Lael's Moon Garden offers several other hydrangea varieties. Although differences in sun tolerance and pruning are noted above, there are a couple of common cultural practices that apply to all of them.

### **Hydrangea Culture**

All hydrangeas require regular moisture to prosper. ("Hydra"--"hydrangea," get it?) If the weather is extremely hot or you (perish the thought) neglect to give them enough water, they will wilt almost instantly. If this should happen don't panic and pronounce them dead. Instead, remain cool and serene and give them a good soaking. If they haven't been dry too long, the chances are high that the next morning they will be back to normal and no one will ever know you neglected one of your babies.

The second cultural requirement is that they like a well-drained porous soil with lots of organic matter. Heavy clay or boggy soils are not good for them. Anyone who has ever tried alcohol knows that a little may be good but a lot is not necessarily better. It's the same with water and hydrangeas. They need moisture, but they also need air around the roots or they will drown or suffocate.

Older hydrangeas macrophylla can be revitalized with selective pruning. You may remove up to a third of the stems by cutting them off at the base. It is best to cut the oldest stems, leaving the younger stems that are loaded with buds. This pruning eliminates poorly flowering parts of the shrub, lets in more air and light and will encourage growth of new branches and thus more blooms.

The color of mophead and lacecap Hydrangea (macrophylla, serrata and aspera) flowers can be highly variable depending on the presence of aluminum and soil PH. (The white flowers of the paniculatas and oak leaf hydrangeas cannot be changed to blue or pink.) Acidic soils with aluminum will enhance the blue to purple tones and sweet or alkaline soils enhance the pink to red tones.

Adding aluminum sulfate will both add aluminum and make the soil more acidic. Adding lime to the soil and or using a fertilizer high in phosphate makes the aluminum less available to the plant and thus heightens the pink tones. It may take several applications of lime to sweeten the soil and if your water is acidic it will negate the sweetness over time.

Our display/test garden has mature examples of almost all of the hydrangeas described above. They're in bloom now so what you see is what you get. Don't forget to look on <http://laelsmoongarden.com/specials.html> to find a "Lael's Moon Garden Buck\$ deal -- just in case you decide to go on a hydrangea "kick" too!



### Other Notes of Interest

#### **Relax and take a stroll through some of the best local gardens.**

Several area private gardens are open to the public on Saturday August 15th through the Garden Conservancy Open Garden days program. Proceeds are used by the Garden Conservancy to preserve exceptional American gardens for public education and enjoyment.

Details at: <http://www.gardenconservancy.org/opendays/events.pl?ID=261&SortBy=&State=>

Or pick up a flyer at our nursery.



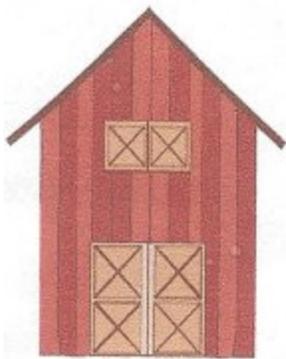
#### **Visit 37 Different Nurseries at one location**

Northwest Horticultural Society Fall Plant sale

Friday, Sept 18, 12:00-6:30 pm and Saturday Sept. 19 9:00 am to 3:00 pm.

@ Warren G. Magnuson Park, 7400 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle (formerly Sand Point Naval Air Station)

More info: [http://www.northwesthort.org/plant\\_sales.html](http://www.northwesthort.org/plant_sales.html)



### **Enjoy some Old-Fashioned Country Fun**

Mark your calendars for the Second annual "Autumn in the Country" at Cedarville Barn near Oakville,

Friday Sept. 25 and Saturday Sept. 26th, 2009, 10 AM to 5 PM.

Many vendors with: primitives, antiques, wood furniture, signs, plants, garden art, pumpkins, collectibles, art, birdhouses, linens, candles, quilts and more. Bringing a touch of the past back! Horse and carriage rides, food and beverages.

85 Lewis Road, Oakville, WA 98568

Map and directions:

<http://www.merchantcircle.com/business/Cedarville.Barn.360-273-5233>

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