



Shrubs that Shine in Summer

Ah, summer. Time for vacations, laying in the hammock and backyard barbeques. Before that next barbeque, add a little color to your yard with some summer flowering shrubs.

Hydrangeas are a staple of the summer garden. Hydrangea macrophylla or Bigleaf hydrangeas have become much more popular with the introduction of 'Endless Summer'. Because of its nature to bloom on both last year's and this year's growth, 'Endless Summer' flowers more reliably than some older varieties that were once common. The 8-inch flowers can be pink or blue depending on the alkalinity or acidity (pH) of the soil becoming pink in alkaline soil and blue in acid. 'Blushing Bride' was the next introduction in the series, with white flowers that mature with a hint of pink. The Bigleaf Hydrangea making all the headlines this year is 'Twist-n-Shout', the first Lacecap hydrangea in the series. The center of the bloom is deep pink and is made up of tiny fertile flowers. The center is surrounded by larger, showy, sterile flowers

either blue or pink depending on soil pH. 'Endless Summer' along with other Bigleaf hydrangeas need consistently moist soil. They also prefer some afternoon shade. With flowers of pink or blue, this 3 to 5 foot makes a showy addition.

Panicle hydrangeas, H. paniculata, are named after their flower shape, a cone shaped cluster of flowers called a panicle. Adaptable and urban tolerant, these are probably the hardiest Hydrangeas. 'Quick Fire' is a 6 to 8 foot tall, fast growing variety that blooms up to a month earlier than the majority of Panicle Hydrangeas. In fact, 'Quick Fire' often produces its showy white flowers and fades to pink before other varieties even begin to bloom.



Quick Fire Hydrangea

'Pinky Winky' is noted for its stunning flower heads. White

florets are still emerging at the top, while at the base the florets have already turned pink. 'Limelight' has unusual chartreuse flower clusters. This hydrangea reaches about 6 to 8 feet tall and really produces a lot of flowers.

Another type of hydrangea is the Smooth Hydrangea, H. paniculata usually seen as the cultivar 'Annabelle.' Selected at the University of Illinois, 'Annabelle' has very large, white flower heads that can reach 1 foot wide. The flowers remain effective for several weeks as they pass from green to white to brown. This hydrangea grows 3 to 5 feet tall and if not restrained, it can form large colonies.

One less common summer shrub is Buttonbush, Cephalanthus occidentalis. This native plant is great for wet areas. In late July into August it is covered with spiky, white, ball-shaped flowers. Another variety with pinkish white flower heads is named 'Sputnik'. Both varieties are quite variable in height, ranging from five to 10 feet, depending on the soil moisture. Don't give up on Buttonbush in the spring. It is late to leaf out and it will be well into

May before it shows signs of life. Not all summer shrubs are white. lacy as 'Black Lace'. Although Bush-honeysuckle has upright somewhat resistant to leaf burn in Bottlebrush Buckeye is a large clusters of yellow flowers held full sun, it still would prefer partial shrub reaching at least eight feet above the bright green foliage. shade. This golden leaved and spreading at least twice that The cultivar 'Butterfly' was cultivar is a great plant to wide. Aesculus parviflora blooms selected for its long flowering brighten a dark corner. in June and July with large, 8 to period, extending from May into 10 inch white bottlebrush-like July. The foliage turns purplish in So before your guests arrive at flowers that stand above the autumn. It prefers full sun to light your next barbecue, run down to foliage. This plant will grow in full shade, and it is adaptable to dry, the Garden Center and pick out a sun to shade. It prefers moist well shady locations. This 3 to 5 foot shrub for summer color. -drained soil but it is somewhat tall plant is a good choice for less than ideal locations. adaptable.



Bottlebrush Buckeye blooms in June and July.

Color doesn't just come from flowers. Lacy, dark purple foliage tops this elderberry variety, 'Black Lace'. Growing 8 to 10 feet, 'Black Lace' has pink flower buds that open to white, flat-topped flower clusters in early June. 'Sutherland Gold' has deeply cut foliage, but it is not as