

Hydrangea arborescens

Smooth Hydrangea

Height: 3 to 5 ft.

Spread: wider than high at maturity

Sun: dappled sunlight to light shade

Soil Moisture: Mesic, consistently damp

Soil Types: Tolerates clay and rocky soil, but needs some decaying organic matter

Bloom Time: June to September

Bloom Description: Tiny white fertile blooms in flat clusters 2-6" across. A few large sterile flowers usually appear at the cluster margins

Uses: Plant 3 feet apart for a natural looking hedgerow or border. Rain Garden. Background for a perennial border. Naturalize in woodland or native plant gardens. Blooms can be dried.

Wildlife:

Nectar: bumblebees, little carpenter bees, Halictid bees, masked bees, miscellaneous wasps, mosquitoes, Syrphid flies, thick-headed flies, Muscid flies, dance flies, tumbling flower beetles, and long-horned beetles

Larval Host: hydrangea sphinx moth, Hydrangea Leaf-Tier Moth

Pollinators: bumblebees, little carpenter bees, Halictid bees, masked bees, miscellaneous wasps, mosquitoes, Syrphid flies, thick-headed flies, Muscid flies, dance flies, tumbling flower beetles, and long-horned beetles

Deer Resistant: Some

Comments: Don't confuse native hydrangeas with its many cultivars. While the cultivars are pretty, they are not beneficial to native pollinators. The showy outer flowers are sterile and are meant to draw pollinators into the small fertile flowers in the center. Since they flower on new growth, you can prune smooth hydrangea back to the ground in the fall each year to keep its size under control and to curtail its tendency to sucker and spread horizontally if you like. The plant may need supplemental watering in hot, dry summers.

