



# HYBRID

THE SCOTT ARBORETUM OF SWARTHMORE COLLEGE

Summer 2021

*Hydrangea aspera* 'Macrophylla' in  
the Terry Shane Teaching Garden

## Hydrangea Oddities Not From Your Grandmother's Garden

Andrew DeGothseir, Gardener

*Hydrangeaceae*, or the hydrangea family, is one of the most popular plant families found within home gardens in the United States. Hydrangeas are adored for their colorful floral displays, bold foliage, and overall ease of maintenance. Some of the most common species in our region include *Hydrangea macrophylla* (big leaf hydrangea), *Hydrangea serrata* (mountain hydrangea), *Hydrangea quercifolia* (bigleaf hydrangea), and *Hydrangea arborescens* (smooth hydrangea), but we are going to jump out of the box and into the depths of some cool, not so common species! Each of these species can be found at the Scott Arboretum, and hopefully soon in your own garden!

### *Hydrangea platyarguta*

*Hydrangea platyarguta* (tea-of-heaven), formerly known as *Platycrater arguta*, is native to parts of China and Japan, and is considered a choice addition in the home shade garden. As the common name suggests, the leaves have been used medicinally throughout its native range. It prefers to grow in a shaded area of the garden,

primarily receiving morning sun with some afternoon shade, and a soil that is moist, but well drained. Hardy in Zones 5 to 9, winter protection from severe winds and temperature extremes is recommended when being grown towards the northern part of its range. Typically, they will grow to a rounded 3- to 4-foot specimen, while boasting slender green leaves that have toothed margins. Panicles of complete and sterile white flowers will appear in summer and its bracts will persist into the fall months for interest once the flowers have subsided. The complete flowers will have very prominent clusters of yellow stamens. The first time you see these flowers you will be in awe. Once fall arrives, the leaves will turn bright yellow that will truly stand out in your shade garden. Exfoliating stems can occur on older specimens adding to its interest for the winter season. There are a few cultivars available on the market currently for purchase. *H. platyarguta* 'Kaeda' has flowers twice as large as the species, while

con't on page 3



## Director's Corner

In a virtual session prepared for Swarthmore College staff titled: "Ongoing Emotional Consequences in a Year of Challenges," some of the coping strategies included "focus on the positive side of a negative situation;" "learn to discover opportunities in difficulties;" and "practice gratitude." With those in mind I want to share news of positive opportunities I'm grateful for:

A significant advancement for the Arboretum is the promotion of Mandie Curtis Banks to a fulltime, ongoing position titled Youth, Family, and Diversity Programs Coordinator. I hope by now her talents are already apparent to many of you who participate in our virtual programming. Mandie has created popular programming to bring the Arboretum to our members and the community during the COVID campus closure, and will concentrate on new opportunities to better engage children and families and develop programming to better serve all those living in our surrounding communities. Having started as the education programs intern two years ago, Mandie can build on the knowledge and experience she has already gained to help the Arboretum offer programming in areas that represent growth opportunities in our reach and impact. Some of the unique qualifications Mandie brings to this new position are:

- Served as Instructor, Director, and Chair in the Theater and Dance Department of the Episcopal Academy from 2002 to 2018
- Choreographer for the Philadelphia Gay Men's Chorus from 2005 to 2007 and in 2019
- Choreographer at Strath Haven High School since 2015
- Worked with the Young People's Theater Workshop as Theater/Dance/Yoga Instructor between 2012 and 2014
- Certified yoga instructor and has had experience in children's and postnatal yoga courses
- Held internships at the Darlington Arts Center in Garnet Valley and with FringeArts in Philadelphia

In addition, she has already developed "Mandie's Nature Nook," expanding our reach to children and families, and she began "Gentle Flow Yoga" which brings physical and mental health and plant awareness uniquely together. I'm grateful to have a talented staff member dedicated to these new initiatives and to be able to anticipate the Arboretum growing in these directions particularly following the past year of children being isolated during COVID, and with inclusivity, diversity, equity, and accessibility (IDEA) issues needing greater awareness and efforts.

I'm also pleased to report the three summer interns we had planned to have with us last summer all accepted our offer to be with us this summer. We have been granted permission by the College to bring



them on board so long as the COVID situation doesn't result in new restrictions. In May, we will (fingers crossed), be welcoming Hailey Dunbar, Julia Hackstie, and Elisheva (Ellie) Hollo to work with us this summer—but we will tell you more about them in the Fall issue of the *Hybrid*.

Another exciting and positive development I'm grateful for and anxiously anticipating, is the next enhancement of the Pinetum. As I write this in early April, 21 beautiful conifers are in the process of being dug and will be added to the Pinetum, made possible with the funds donated during the 2018 annual appeal. In the last *Hybrid*, I included some winter photos of the Pinetum work accomplished over the fall and winter months—new mulched pathways and the creation of rustic furniture. But we all know it's the beauty of plants that gets us excited, so I can't wait to welcome these new needed gems into our collection of conifers.

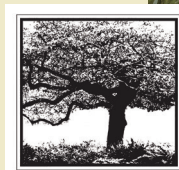
*Claire Sawyer*

Claire Sawyers  
Director

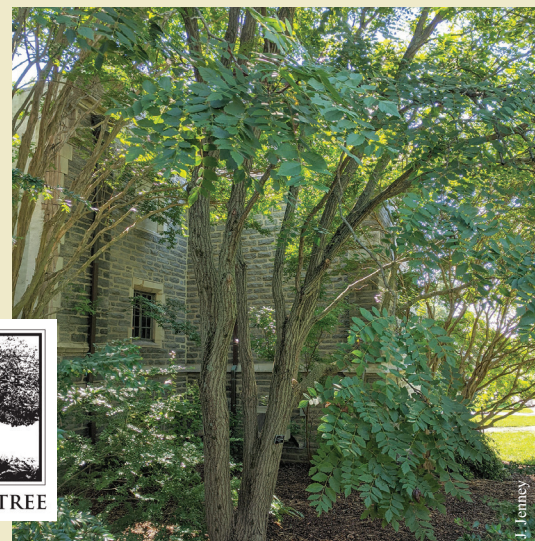


## Heritage Tree Feature: *Koelreuteria bipinnata*

The Scott Arboretum has two specimens of the bougainvillea golden-raintree (*Koelreuteria bipinnata*) one of which is a Heritage Tree located below McCabe Library, next to the Old Tarble art studio. Planted in 1992, this lovely tree reaches 46 feet high, has a canopy spread of 37 feet, and its trunk circumference is 18 inches. In 1999 it was noted as a champion of exotic trees in New Jersey and vicinity. This particular tree is an excellent, mature example of *Koelreuteria bipinnata* with its beautiful bark, panicles of bright yellow flowers in August to September, ornamental rose-pink seed pods, and golden-yellow autumn foliage.



HERITAGE TREE







*Hydrangea platyarguta*

A. DeGothser

con't from cover

'Honey Moon' boasts flowers three times as large, and fragrant! If you are lucky enough, sometimes you can locate 'Rosea', which is a blushed pink-flowered form. A beautiful specimen of *H. platyarguta* can be found in the Harry Wood Garden at the Scott Arboretum.

#### *Hydrangea involucrata*

*Hydrangea involucrata* (bracted hydrangea) is native to Japan and Taiwan, and is rarely found in the American home garden. The common name comes from the whorl of bracts that surrounds the flowers. Like most hydrangeas, it prefers to have some protection from strong afternoon sun with moist, well-drained soil. Even though *H. involucrata* is only hardy to Zone 6 and may be killed back to the ground by extreme cold, it can rejuvenate in the spring and flower on new growth, or the current season's wood. A hydrangea that will flower on new wood, such as *H. arborescens*, *H. paniculata*, and *H. involucrata*, are perfect where harsh winters may occur so you won't have a bloomless year, unlike what might happen with *H. macrophylla* that flowers on the previous season's wood. Most *H. involucrata* will grow 4 to 5 feet tall and wide, but there are some cultivars available that stay a bit smaller. Their lace cap flowers can be pink, white, purple, and even blue! Typical bloom time is mid-to late-summer, but flowering can persist into the fall. Although the flowers are beautiful, to me they are not the top prize—it's the flower buds! The attractive buds stand above their fuzzy, serrated foliage, and resemble buds from a peony! Truly show stoppers, the buds can often be an inch or two in diameter before opening. Some popular cultivars are 'Hortensis', 'Yokudanka', 'Plena', 'Wim Ruten', and 'Tama Azisai'. You can find 'Hortensis' and 'Yokudanka' in the Terry Shane Teaching Garden.



*Hydrangea involucrata*  
'Hortensis'

R. Robert

#### *Hydrangea longipes*

*Hydrangea longipes* (species hydrangea) is a little known species to the average gardener. This plant boasts huge, dark green leaves that can be as large as 8 inches long by about 5 inches wide! It is native to parts of western China where it can be found growing along stream banks and in mountainous forests. Since it is hardy to Zone 5, there should be no problem with it getting through Delaware Valley winters. The floral displays are white lace caps about 8 inches wide, which tend to hang down. It prefers moist, well-drained soil and to be grown in a shaded site with minimal direct afternoon sunlight. It will not tolerate soils that tend to dry out. *H. longipes* is a very large species eventually growing to 8 feet tall and wide, so make sure you have ample space for this beauty. This species blooms from old wood, so little to no pruning should be carried out, unless you are removing damaged or dead branches, or the previous seasons dried flowers. If for some reason you must prune this plant, the best time would be immediately after flowering towards the end of summer. For any gardener in our region looking for a rare hydrangea that will make a statement in the garden, and without fear of hardiness issues, this is the one for you! You can find a specimen of *H. longipes* in the Hydrangea Collection which is located just west of the Lang Center for Civic and Social Responsibility.



*Hydrangea involucrata*  
'Hortensis' in the Terry  
Shane Teaching Garden

R. Robert

#### *Hydrangea aspera*

*Hydrangea aspera* (rough-leaf hydrangea) are the Goliaths of the hydrangea world. They are native to forests and mountainous regions of eastern Asia. Residing as the largest shrubs within *Hydrangeaceae*, these plants can exceed 10 feet tall and wide over their lifespan, depending on variety and cultivar. They have large attractive leaves that are fuzzy, or rough to the touch, up to 10 inches long and 5 inches wide. The leaves can be green, red, or even purple in color! In some cases, the stems may be fuzzy

con't on back



# Scott Arboretum Plant

## *Fagus sylvatica* 'Asplenifolia'

Adam Glas, Garden Supervisor

Originally thought to be discovered in the woodlands of France, *Fagus sylvatica* 'Asplenifolia', the fernleaf European beech as it is commonly known, is a striking, large specimen tree. The genus *Fagus* can be found in the United States as well as in Europe and Asia. The former having the specific epithet of *grandifolia* (American beech) and the latter *sylvatica* (European beech). The European cultivars account for a wide variety of habits, forms, and leaf colors ranging from copper, green, purple, gold, or variegated. They also offer a wide variety of leaf shapes. The fernleaf beech was introduced into the nursery trade in 1804 by Conard Loddiges and Sons nursery in England. Due to its unusually beautiful foliage and adaptability in the landscape, it has gained popularity over the decades.

Pyramidal in its youth, this stately, deciduous tree will reach heights of 60 feet with a spread of 45 feet. If properly sighted, this beautiful member of the family *Fagaceae* is commonly known to live for 150 years. Considered to be slow in growth it will take its time achieving its picturesque mature form. In my opinion, the most beautiful specimens are the ones allowed to grow into their natural habit—so resist the urge to limb them up! Leaving the elegant, lower, wide-spreading branches in place will allow this tree's beautiful habit to shine.

The fernleaf beech is hardy in Zones 5 to 7 and will grow best in full sun. Though it is not particular about soil type, it will not tolerate heavy, wet clay. It is said to be perfectly happy in seaside conditions and since it is tolerant of mild pollution, it performs well in urban environments.

*Fagus sylvatica* 'Asplenifolia' is a deciduous tree with beautiful, smooth, dark to medium grey bark often described as elephant-like. In spring, the chestnut brown, cigar-like buds unfurl to display light green, finely cut, fern-like foliage. The cultivar name Asplenifolia nods to the genus *Asplenium*, a type of fern. The distinct medium-to-fine-textured foliage creates an exceptionally beautiful effect during the growing season not often seen amongst

large shade trees. Also in the spring, separate male and female flowers appear, but they are small and inconspicuous. Although not considered ornamental, the female flowers produce a three-angled nut with a spiny husk. The nuts are prized by squirrels and deer, and humans can consume the nuts in small quantities raw or roasted. It is also said that in the spring, young leaves can be cooked as greens. As the days shorten and the temperature drops, the foliage takes on an excellent golden-brown hue—it definitely exhibits four seasons of interest!

Due to its stately size, low branching habit, and shallow root system, an open lawn is an ideal location to plant a fernleaf beech. On campus, two specimens can be found in the Parrish West Circle. Planting this lovely selection of beech could provide a specimen tree enjoyed by many generations yet to come.



## Early spring blooms at the Scott Arboretum

All images by R. Robert





# Portraits

Laurel Voran's drawings will return for the fall issue of the *Hybrid!*

## *Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *deamii*

Sandra Lopez Cortez, Gardener

One of the most recognizable perennials in North American landscapes is *Rudbeckia*, commonly known as black-eyed Susan. *Rudbeckia* is not a worldwide group of plants—all of the approximately 20 species are North American natives, making them American wildflowers.

Most of the species are considered perennials but some are annuals and biennials. They are members of the aster/daisy family (*Asteraceae*) featuring their showy, daisy-like flowers with a central eye of disk florets and yellow ray florets.

The attractive, clump-forming perennial *Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *deamii* (Deam's coneflower) is native only to parts of Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio and is hardy in Zones 4 to 9. It grows best in average to well-drained soils in full sun. However, it can tolerate a wide range of conditions such as part sun, clay, sand, drought, heat, and humidity.

The genus *Rudbeckia* is in honor of Swedish botanist Olof Rudbeck and his son Olof. The specific epithet *fulgida* means “shiny” in Latin and the variety name *deamii* was named after the American botanist Charles Deam who discovered the species in the wild.

This garden classic with bold texture and upright habit grows to 3 feet tall and 2 feet wide featuring rich golden yellow ray florets with distinctly raised dark brown cones from early summer through fall. Stems are sturdy and pubescent with leathery dark green oblong leaves making this perennial undesirable to rabbits and deer. The flower heads are borne in such profusion they almost cover the foliage.

A common problem with rudbeckias is septoria leaf spot and powdery mildew, however, *Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *deamii* is generally resistant to both. This North American native species was awarded the prestigious Royal Horticultural Society Award of Garden Merit for its outstanding performance in 1993.

This is a fantastic plant for pollinators as the flowers attract many including, but not limited to, native bees, skippers,

butterflies, pollinating flies, and beetles. In addition, the seed heads remain on the plant into early winter offering sustenance to birds during a time of the year when food is scarce. Deam's coneflower looks spectacular when massed or grouped together in the perennial border, naturalized areas, and cut flower gardens. I recommend combining *Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *deamii* with *Phlox paniculata* ‘Jeana’ (garden phlox), *Calamintha nepeta* subsp. *glandulosa* ‘White Cloud’ (lesser calamint), *Liatris aspera* (rough blazing star), and *Schizachyrium scoparium* (little bluestem).

At the Scott Arboretum, Deam's coneflower flourishes in front of the Lang Music Building massed with *Perovskia atriplicifolia* ‘CrazyBlue’ (Russian sage).

When placed in a good location, Deam's coneflower will happily self-sow or spread by creeping rhizomes. I highly recommend this plant because it is so striking, versatile, and extremely easy to grow. If not available at your favorite nurseries, other worthy substitutes include *Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *fulgida* (orange coneflower), *Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *sullivantii* ‘Goldsturm’, or *Rudbeckia* ‘American Gold Rush’ (both commonly known as black-eyed Susan).



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## New plant arrivals



### WOODY PLANTS

*Aronia melanocarpa* ‘UCONNAM012’ (Ground Hug™ black chokeberry) – NPPR Apartment B  
*Fothergilla gardenii* ‘Suzanne’ (dwarf fothergilla) – Beardsley Hall  
*Leucothoe axillaris* ‘Curly Red’ (coast leucothoe) – College Avenue (near Camellia Collection)  
*Malus* ‘Prairifire’ (crabapple) – Beardsley Hall (note: this is the correct spelling of the cultivar)  
*Rosa* ‘Basye’s Purple Rose’ (shrub rose) – Dean Bond Rose Garden – Bed #5  
*Rosa* ‘MORTen’ (Linda Campbell™ hybrid rugosa rose) – Dean Bond Rose Garden – Bed #2  
*Syringa vulgaris* ‘Rochester’ (common lilac) – Lilac Collection

### PERENNIALS

*Epimedium wushanense* ‘Sandy Claws’ (barrenwort; bishop’s hat) – Beardsley Hall  
*Molinia caerulea* ssp. *caerulea* ‘Heidebraut’ (purple moor grass) – Martin Hall  
*Paeonia* ‘Roy Pehrson’s Best Yellow’ (herbaceous peony) – Harry Wood Garden  
*Rodgersia podophylla* ‘Bloody Wheels’ (rogersia; rogersflower) – Terry Shane Teaching Garden  
*Vancouveria hexandra* (American barrenwort) – Harry Wood Garden



# A Second Life for Trees

## Mandie Curtis Banks, Youth, Family, and Diversity Programs Coordinator



D. Mattis

**Abracadabra created by Patrick Dougherty in 2000**

Trees are the lifeblood of an arboretum. They provide us with shade, improve our local air, supply ecosystems for wildlife, and enhance our landscapes with their beauty and magnificence. But what happens when a tree dies or needs to be removed? The Scott Arboretum has turned misfortune into creative opportunity for many trees lost. Turning to art has allowed us to reuse trees in a memorable and beneficial way for our landscape and our community. Here are a few notable examples of how we have given trees a second life throughout the years.



R. Robert

**Shingles on the Wister Center made of dawn redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*)**

One of the most memorable examples happened in the year 2000 when landscape artist Patrick Dougherty was invited to create a sculpture from a dying American linden (*Tilia americana*). Located in the lawn near the Dean Bond Rose Garden, Dougherty's sculpture was nothing short of magical. Given the title *Abracadabra*, Dougherty transformed the dying linden into a larger than life sculpture which featured

swirling and twirling twigs that seemed to dance with the tree.

Another temporary art installation inspired by a deceased tree was the oak leaf sculpture designed and created by chainsaw artist Marty Long. The sculpture brought new life to a deceased Bender oak tree (*Quercus × benderi*) that predated 1864, the founding of the College. Located near the Faulkner tennis courts, Long's impressive sculpture of a massive curving oak leaf was a shining example of how art and beauty can still exist when living things pass on.

Starting in 2008 the Scott Arboretum staff began making an artistic statement by painting dying trees on campus. This approach demands attention and elicits a reaction. It encourages visitors to notice details like the structure of the tree, the intricacy of the bark, and the impact of the tree against a landscape. It is a perfect example of how art and nature can become intimately entwined.

The first tree known as "The Blue Tree" was a Chinese maackia (*Maackia chinensis*) near the Cosby Courtyard which was a casualty of construction impaction. Rather than cut the tree down, the staff instead chose to paint the tree a head-turning electric blue. The eclectic tree was so beloved on campus that a student even wrote an obituary for it when it eventually blew over.



R. Maurer

**"The Blue Tree" in the Cosby Courtyard in 2006**

The blue tree was followed by the red tree in 2010. This bur oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*) was named "In the Shadow of Abracadabra" since it was located in the same vicinity as the *Abracadabra* sculpture. The *Quercus* was painted a bright crimson red to mimic the roses in the Dean Bond Rose Garden and it naturally drew the eye to Parrish Hall, McCabe Library, and Trotter Hall.

The last painted tree was the memorable "Purple Tree" in 2016. Located near the fieldhouse tunnel, this weeping eastern hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis* 'Pendula') made an impact on its own with its expansive and remarkable branching habit. When the regal purple paint was added, along with a bright underplanting of





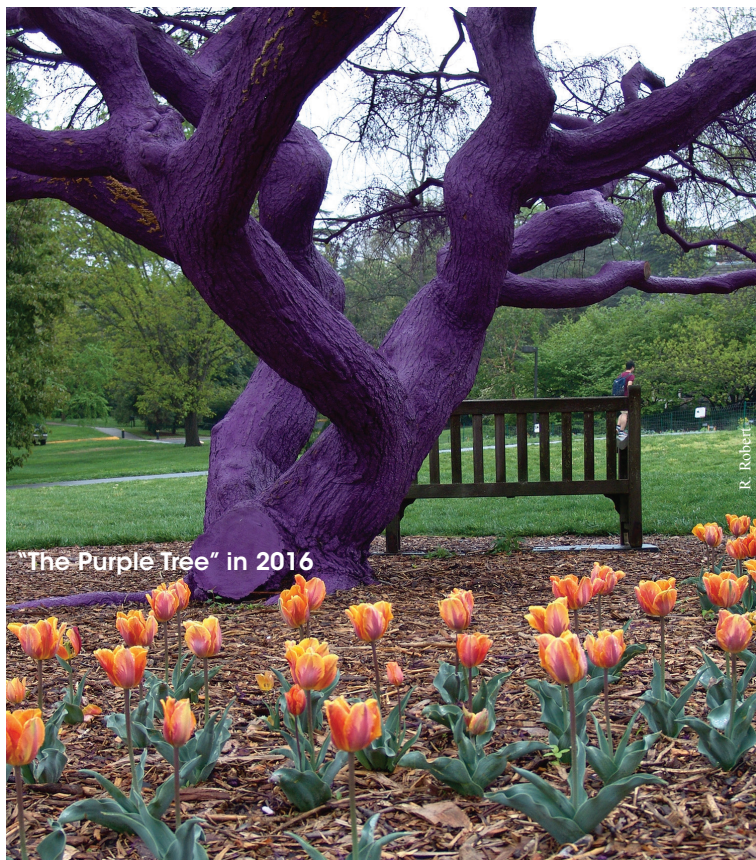
The new Singer Hall landscape also demonstrates that necessity is the mother of invention. A unique stumpery has recently been created from trees removed from the building site and its goal is to increase awareness of the root structure of trees while also providing seating space. This space encourages you to take a seat and become a part of the underground life of a tree.

Trees have also been given new life through numerous, smaller, artistic projects. Bowls were made out of a removed crab apple tree when the Wister Center was built and were given as presents to donors to the project. Shingles cladding the Wister Center were made out of removed dawn redwoods (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*) when Alice Paul and Kemp Hall were built. Lumber donations taken from the trunk of a deceased redwood tree (*Sequoia sempervirens*) were given to Maker's Space (an open and communal creative making facility at Swarthmore College). And interior work of the new dining hall may include wood from removed *Sequoia sempervirens*, as well as *Metasequoia glyptostroboides*, and swamp white oak (*Quercus bicolor*).

Claire Sawyers, Director of the Scott Arboretum, sees many of these efforts as "ephemeral environmental art that gets people to think about the fragility of trees and/or to notice the landscape without taking it for granted." We are giving a tree a second life by drawing attention to it in a whole new way with an eye towards sustainability and artistic expression.

orange tulips, it made such an incredible statement that it stopped visitors in their tracks!

The newest iteration of giving trees a second life at the Scott Arboretum is in the Pinetum. Trees that needed to be cut down have been made into a new seating area. A mulched and edged winding path leads visitors to a woodland hideaway nestled among mature conifers. The seating area is circular and features chairs of all different shapes and sizes reminiscent of a scene from a favorite fairy tale—an ideal getaway in the middle of campus.







J. Coccaro

*Hydrangea involucrata*  
'Yokudanka'

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or covered with hairs. Most *H. aspera* are only hardy to Zone 7, but with recent breeding work they can overwinter in Zone 6. Rough-leaf hydrangeas bloom from the previous season's growth, so a protected spot in the garden that doesn't receive vast temperature extremes throughout the winter months would be best suited. If the winter is harsh and the top growth is killed off, they will normally send up new shoots from the base in spring. Even though you will not get flowers that year, the plant still provides excellent interest and structure in the garden since the new growth will be very robust. *H. aspera* prefers a moist but well-drained soil and does not want to be sitting in soggy soil, especially during the winter. When placing in your garden, find a location that receives morning sun, and at the very least, dappled shade for the remainder of the day. Providing too much direct afternoon sun may result in some leaf scorching. The impressive floral displays are lacecap in form with sturdy flowers that stand proudly above the foliage, and can be as large as a foot in size! Flowers of *H. aspera* will also attract a wide variety of pollinators. As plants mature, their bark tends to peel or appear flaky, offering up great winter interest accompanied by the dried flowers. In the Terry Shane Teaching Garden you will find specimens of *H. aspera* 'Macrophylla' and 'Burgundy Bliss', while in the Hydrangea Collection you can find *H. aspera* ssp. *aspera* and *H. aspera* ssp. *sargentiana*.

There are many more hydrangeas than the common types we see—so I invite you to try one or all of these not-so-common hydrangeas in your own garden!



J. Coccaro

*Hydrangea aspera* 'Macrophylla'

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