

## Garden Highlights – July



*Hydrangea quercifolia*

oakleaf hydrangea

Hydrangeaceae – the hydrangea family

Native to the southeast United States

This hydrangea is eye-catching in the summer months when it is in bloom, but it also provides year-round interest in the garden. With bold leaves that turn burgundy in fall, bark that exfoliates, and long lasting flowers, there's not a bad time of year for *Hydrangea quercifolia*.

The name clearly refers to the oak-like leaves. Each leaf is large with a coarse texture and deep lobes. Their color is deep green, and changes to red, orange, or burgundy in the fall. In the northwest, the leaves can persist on the plant into the winter.

The conical flower clusters can get up to a foot long. They consist of large white sterile sepals and fertile flowers. The color starts out white and fades to rosy pink. Unless pruned off, the flowers will dry on the plant, creating more winter interest.

This beautiful shrub is underused in northwest gardens, particularly considering its ease of care. It can tolerate some drought, although it prefers a rich soil with regular moisture. Plant oakleaf hydrangeas in full sun to part shade. Pruning, although not necessary, should be done in the fall after flowering, but can realistically be done any time of the year.

