

**Hydrangea Talk at SGC of Cheshire**

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By Joy VanderLek The Cheshire Citizen

In landscaping, gardeners should take another look at the hydrangea, according to Adam Wheeler, propagation and development manager of Hamden’s Broken Arrow Nursery. He spoke on the versatility of the plant in a March 19 presentation to the Suburban Garden Club of Cheshire. A large audience attended the meeting, which was open to the public, at the Cheshire Senior Center.

Reviewing the classic round mopheads, lacecap varieties, tree and climbing hydrangeas, more than 30 species are within the genus, Wheeler said. The hydrangea is “tremendously variable” in color and type. Hydrangeas are good in borders or used as a specimen plant. They are also well suited for foundations. The most basic needs are rich, evenly moist soil, heavy in organic matter. Wheeler also had advice on where to plant. When siting a plant, do not locate them in totally exposed areas, nor in the coldest areas of your yard, he said. As for pruning, “There is no straightforward answer.” Since some bloom on new growth and some on old growth, “You have to know your variety,” he said.

Suggestion on hydrangea selections to try this season include Hayes Starburst for its double flower, and Green Dragon for texture. Good fall color comes from Blushing Bride which starts basic white and ages to purple, then turns red in the fall. For the unusual, there’s Lady in Red with a blue lacecap flower, that ages to red with red stems and veins, and a hydrangea more like a groundcover in Hallasan. It grows two to five feet wide. Another unusual hydrangea is Aspen with huge, 18-inch leaves, which are fuzzy and feel like velvet. One selection, however, is a particular favorite with Wheeler.

Limelight is a panicle hydrangea which grows to about seven feet tall and sports an unusual 12 to 15 inch green pyramid flower that turns pink as it ages.