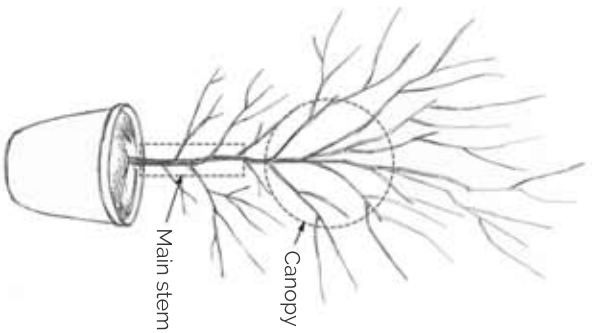


GROW YOUR OWN HYDRANGEA TREE

Step 1

Start with a mature panicle hydrangea shrub either planted in a very large container or in the ground. Keep in mind this process may take 2-3 years to complete.

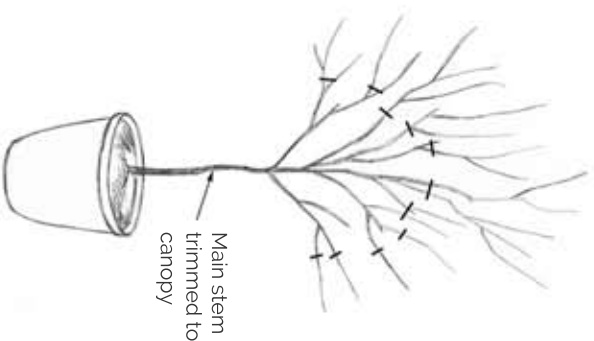
Find the main stem coming from the center of the base of the plant. This will become the trunk of the hydrangea tree.



Step 2

About 4' up from the ground, select a solid framework of 6-8 sturdy main branches coming off the trunk like spokes on an umbrella. These will form the canopy of the hydrangea tree.

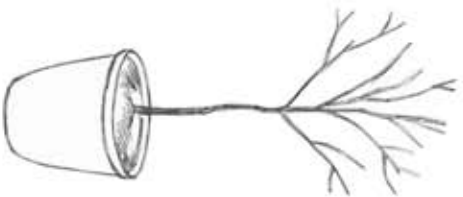
Remove all extra and crisscrossing branches that are not part of the main framework. Also remove any errant stems growing from the base or sides of the trunk. Do this every spring.



Step 3

Plan to trim the branches of your hydrangea tree back to about 6" or 2-3 nodes (bumps) on the stem from which new growth sprouts) every year in early spring before new growth appears. Don't worry about cutting off flower buds—these hydrangeas bloom on new wood.

Cutting the branches back hard will encourage a fuller canopy and flowers to develop closer to the trunk. If you leave them too long, the branches may arch over under the weight of the flowers instead of keeping their shape.



TIPS FOR GROWING HYDRANGEA TREES

- ▶ Since they are grown on their own roots, panicle hydrangea trees are just as hardy as panicle hydrangea shrubs. It's the same plant pruned into a different shape.
- ▶ Panicle hydrangeas are hardy to zone 3, so they can be overwintered safely in containers in zones 4 and warmer. Find a spot to overwinter yours in a shed or bury the container in a heap of mulch in a protected spot in your garden such as up against a fence line. Bring it back out again in early spring.
- ▶ Only prune your hydrangea tree in early spring before new growth appears.
- ▶ Whether you purchase a ready-made hydrangea tree or make your own, it will require annual pruning for the canopy to keep its shape. If you don't prune it each year, all of your hard work will be undone and you'll lose the look you wanted.
- ▶ Panicle hydrangeas are one of the hardest and easiest to grow. Even if you prune it wrong, it will likely recover so don't worry and just have fun with it!