

First Year Important in Hydrangea Nutrition

The nutrition of hydrangeas prior to storage has a great deal to do with their performance during the forcing period. Work at the University of Maryland by Shanks, et al. has shown that a high level of phosphorus in the soil interferes with good color development of the blooms. They also associated peduncle breakdown of hydrangea with high phosphorus.

Either high nitrogen or high phosphorus made the production of blue flowers more difficult. They noted a mutual effect of applications of aluminium and phosphorus in rendering one another unavailable. In other words, high phosphorus tends to counteract the additions of aluminium.

Shanks and his colleagues recommend the following nutrient levels for: Pink flowers--medium nitrogen, medium phosphorus, and medium to high potassium. Blue flowers--medium nitrogen, low phosphorus and medium to high potassium with aluminium.

If these levels are carried prior to storage less trouble may be experienced

later. Plants have a way of storing up large quantities of nutrients, if they are available. If you plan to have your hydrangeas blue instead of purple, keep the phosphorus low all the way.