



HYDRANGEA MACROPHYLLA

Fam. Hydrangeaceae

DESCRIPTION

This hydrangea has a rounded shape with dimensions ranging from 40 cm up to about 3 metres. It has sturdy branches which in some cases bend under the weight of the flowers.

HABITAT

Native to Asia; it is present in a limited area of the east coast of Japan.

DISTRIBUTION

This type of hydrangea was first reported in 1771 in the *Herbier Commercon*, whose author Philibert Commerson seems to have found the bush in a garden on Bourbon Island. It was then brought to England, from where it spread throughout Europe.

FLOWERS

Corymbs formed by a central axis from which peduncles branch out. The peduncles support pedicels bearing fertile or sterile flowers. The external flower parts are sterile, while the coloured petals are actually formed by the sepals. The colours that this species can take on are the most varied – white, pink and even blue.

LEAVES

The leaves are green and have jagged margins; in autumn they tend to take on orange and reddish hues.

FRUITS

A brown pod containing small dark seeds.

SEEDS

After flowering, pods will ripen that can hold about a hundred small seeds.

STEM

Woody stem.

INTERESTING FACTS

The colour is not an intrinsic characteristic of the plant but rather an effect of the acidity of the soil and the substances dissolved in it. Hydrangeas, in fact, are extremely sensitive, compared to other plants, to the pH of the soil and the chemical components that it contains. More specifically, if the pH is acidic, the flowers will turn blueish; in the case of neutral or alkaline soil, they will be pink. Various drinks can be obtained from hydrangeas: Amacha, from Japan, is one of them and is obtained by fermenting the leaves. In the language of flowers, Hydrangea represents the desire to get away from someone. Despite this, it is ironic to note that this plant bears the name of the woman botanist Philibert Commerson was in love with – in some parts of Europe, this plant is called *Hortensia*, after Jeanne Baret who later changed her name to Hortense. Too bad, however, that she was already married to another man: one of his best friends.

ROOTS

They grow very quickly and extend deeply.

