Hydrangea quercifolia Oakleaf Hydrangea
Edward F. Gilman

Introduction
Oakleaf hydrangea has 8 to 12-inch-long leaves shaped like oak leaves (Fig. 1). They are borne on stiff, upright, hairy stems which occasionally branch. A fuller shrub can be created by pinching the new growth or cutting back old growth. The plant grows in sun or shade and prefers a rich, moist soil. In the northern part of its range, the top usually dies back during the winter and it needs shelter from high winds. Oakleaf hydrangea transplants easily and has a very coarse texture and good red fall color. This sprawling, slow-growing shrub reaches 6 to 10 feet tall and spreads three to five feet. The flowers, produced in mid-summer in panicles, are at first white, then fade to pink and then tan. If you wish to prune this hydrangea to create a dense shrub, do so after it flowers so you can enjoy the spectacular flower display.

General information
Scientific name: Hydrangea quercifolia
Pronunciation: hye-DRAN-jee-uh kwur-sif-FOLE-ee-uh
Common name(s): oakleaf hydrangea

Family: Saxifragaceae
Plant type: shrub
USDA hardiness zones: 5B through 9 (Fig. 2)
Planting month for zone 7: year round
Planting month for zone 8: year round
Planting month for zone 9: year round
Origin: native to Florida
Uses: mass planting; specimen; screen; accent
Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

Figure 1. Oakleaf hydrangea.

Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Description
Height: 6 to 10 feet
Spread: 6 to 8 feet
Plant habit: upright; round
Plant density: moderate
Growth rate: fast

2. Edward F. Gilman, professor, Environmental Horticulture Department, UF/IFAS Extension, Gainesville, FL 32611.

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is an Equal Opportunity Institution authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function with non-discrimination with respect to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations. For more information on obtaining other UF/IFAS Extension publications, contact your county’s UF/IFAS Extension office.

U.S. Department of Agriculture, UF/IFAS Extension Service, University of Florida, IFAS, Florida A & M University Cooperative Extension Program, and Boards of County Commissioners Cooperating. Nick T. Place, dean for UF/IFAS Extension.
**Texture:** coarse

**Foliage**
- **Leaf arrangement:** opposite/subopposite
- **Leaf type:** simple
- **Leaf margin:** ciliate; serrate
- **Leaf shape:** ovate
- **Leaf venation:** pinnate
- **Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous
- **Leaf blade length:** 8 to 12 inches
- **Leaf color:** green
- **Fall color:** purple
- **Fall characteristic:** showy

Figure 3. Foliage of oakleaf hydrangea.

**Flower**
- **Flower color:** pink
- **Flower characteristic:** summer flowering; spring flowering

**Fruit**
- **Fruit shape:** oval
- **Fruit length:** less than .5 inch
- **Fruit cover:** dry or hard
- **Fruit color:** brown
- **Fruit characteristic:** persists on the plant

**Trunk and Branches**
- **Trunk/bark/branches:** not particularly showy; typically multi-trunked or clumping stems
- **Current year stem/twig color:** brown
- **Current year stem/twig thickness:** thick

**Culture**
- **Light requirement:** plant grows in full sun
- **Soil tolerances:** occasionally wet; clay; sand; acidic; slightly alkaline; loam
- **Drought tolerance:** moderate
- **Soil salt tolerances:** poor
- **Plant spacing:** 36 to 60 inches

**Other**
- **Roots:** sprouts from roots or lower trunk
- **Winter interest:** plant has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers
- **Outstanding plant:** plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more
- **Invasive potential:** not known to be invasive
- **Pest resistance:** no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

**Use and Management**
Because of their size, most residential landscapes only need one or two of these plants. Especially attractive at the edge of woods or other natural settings, oakleaf hydrangea likes fertile, acid, well-drained soil, and requires no attention once it becomes established. It makes a nice accent in a shrub border or growing out of a ground cover.

Available cultivars include 'Snow Queen', large, pure white blooms maturing to pink; ‘Snow Flake’, large double flowers; and ‘Harmony’ with 12-inch-long, heavy white flower clusters.

Propagation is by seed, cuttings, or separation of the suckers which develop at the base of the plant.

**Pest and Diseases**
No pests or diseases are of major concern.