

It's a Gardener's World!

If you're looking for a garden flower with show appeal, hydrangea flowers are truly stunning. Large globes of flowers cover this shrub in summer and spring. Hydrangea flowers can be the foundation plant of your landscape. The name hydrangea comes from the Greek words "hydor" meaning water and "angos" meaning vessel. Which together roughly translate to "water barrel". This is because of the fact that hydrangeas are notorious for their cup-shaped flowers & needing lots of water. To me they are the little BIG flower. Their pom-pom of small flowers cluster all together like friends, happy and intimate.

Many people remember hydrangea shrubs from their childhood, with their big pom-pom heads. Today we are falling in love with them all over again. And the good news is that we can now grow many hydrangea varieties our grandmothers never even dreamed of. Some newer hydrangeas grow in colder climates, some are so small they will fit into the perennial border, and others have amazingly large blooms and deep colours.



But while they are many & everywhere, they are not what they seem!

For starters, the bloom of the hydrangea is not a true flower, but are mostly modified leaves or sepals (that part of the flower which acts as protection for the flower in bud), overshadowing the small, almost unnoticeable fertile floral portion at the centre. And while it's the bloom colours which really make the hydrangea stand out, ranging from pink to blue, including all shades of lavender to violet to purple, hydrangea colours are not what they seem, either! The colour of many hydrangea blooms act as a natural pH indicator for the soil in which the plant grows. Such blooms have blue sepals when the shrub grows in acidic soil, but develop red or pink sepals when grown in neutral to alkaline soils, with these distinguishing colours being the reverse of those for litmus paper. The hydrangea is unique among plants in this ability to indicate soil acidity.

It's a bit like being a Christian – before a plant grows up, it grows down.

This is true of every plant I know of. For a plant to grow & grow well, it needs roots in good soil. I think this is an important concept for our lives as well. What kind of soil are you rooted in? Acid or Alkaline?

The kind of soil your life is rooted in will determine how you're growing – blue or pink?

This is why some of us have maybe struggled daily in recent months with feelings of fear, or anxiety, because we're weary or worried, asking questions like 'why this?', 'why us?', 'why now?'

What comes up from your life reflects the kind of soil you're rooted in. Today's parable explains that well.

As followers of Jesus we're called to bear much fruit. What is the fruit that our lives are producing on a regular basis for God, for others & for the world?

Paul once prayed this for the believers in Ephesus:

"When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. **Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong.** And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is." Ephesians 3 v14-18

So if you want to grow, if you want your faith to grow, your life to grow, then you need to be rooted in the rich soil that is the love of God. And when you do, His love will keep you strong. You see, it's when your roots go down into the rich soil of God's love that your hands go up in worship. It's when your roots go down into the rich soil that is the love of God that you're able to stand strong in the middle of the storm. It's when your roots go down deep into God's love that your life is characterized by faith, by strength, by peace, by love, by self-control because these are the fruits of the Spirit that are revealed in a life that is rooted in God's great love for you.