

Hydrangea Soil pH and Sulfur or Lime Amendment Rate Calculator Sheet

Companion Reference Sheet for: Hydrangea Bloom Color: What Soil pH Can Actually Change
Save this PDF to your phone or print a copy for field reference. Verify local conditions and manufacturer specs before use.

Key Takeaways

Question	Short answer
What color does acidic soil encourage?	Blue is more likely when soil is pH 5.5 or lower and aluminum is available to the roots.
What color does alkaline soil encourage?	Pink is typical at pH 7.0 or higher, where aluminum availability decreases.
Which hydrangeas respond to pH?	Some bigleaf and mountain hydrangeas can shift color. Many white, smooth, and panicle types do not respond in the same way.
What should you do before changing pH?	Test the soil, then choose a suitable amendment and apply it according to its directions.
Will the color change immediately?	No. A soil adjustment takes time, and open blooms do not recolor because an amendment is added.
Do coffee grounds reliably turn flowers blue?	No. They are not a dependable way to measure or manage soil pH.

How soil pH and aluminum shape bloom color

Soil condition or goal	Common option	What it changes	Practical check
Encourage pink in a responsive cultivar	Garden lime	Raises pH and can reduce aluminum availability	Use only when a soil test supports raising pH.
Encourage blue in a responsive cultivar	Elemental sulfur	Lowers pH over time	Apply in stages and retest rather than making a large correction at once.
Encourage blue and supply aluminum	Aluminum sulfate	Can acidify soil and add aluminum	Use cautiously, since excess can harm roots.
Maintain acid-loving plant nutrition	Espoma Organic Holly-Tone	A 4-3-4 fertilizer with 5% sulfur	Its formulation supports acid-loving plants.

Test the soil before choosing an amendment

A soil test helps you avoid adding lime or sulfur in the wrong direction. If you want a basic home check, collect soil from several spots around the root zone, mix the samples, and use a test strip or meter according to its instructions.

For a closer look at nutrients as well as pH, see [5 Best Soil Testing Kits: Reviews and Top Picks](#). The MySoil Soil Test Kit analyzes 13 plant-available nutrient levels and includes fertilizer recommendations. The kit is listed at **\$34.99**.

Take the reading near the hydrangea's active root area, not just at the surface or beside a different plant. If your soil is strongly resistant to change, repeating the test after an amendment helps you see whether the adjustment is lasting.

DID YOU KNOW?

To gradually change flower color from pink to blue, broadcast half a cup of wettable sulfur per 10 square feet and water it in.

Source: [University of Georgia CAES Field Report](#)