

## Heavenly new hydrangeas

### These spectacular summer-flowering shrubs are now available in a grand assortment of colours

BY STEVE WHYSALL, VANCOUVER SUN JUNE 3, 2011

Hydrangeas are an indispensable component of the summer garden.

Flowers are big and beautiful, often spectacular, but at the same time they never fail to project a graceful charm that is easy to interpret as classic simplicity or refined elegance.

It's probably this quality of sophistication that makes them such fabulous blooms to cut and pack into large arrangements or feature boldly in grand table bouquets.

This spring I added seven new hydrangeas to my garden, planting most of them in containers to create a little courtyard of hydrangeas. They were all developed by Ball Horticultural, of Chicago.

As they grow, I can relocate them into appropriate sites around the garden, but for now I am content to watch them develop as container specimens.

Three of them are part of the Double Delights series, developed specifically to flower more abundantly and repeatedly.

'Perfection' has pink flowers and grows 61 to 91 cm (24 to 36 inches).

'Star Gazer' has large flowers with blue centres and white picotee edges and grows a little taller, reaching 90 cm to 1.2 m (three to four feet).

And 'Wedding Gown' is an early blooming lacecap-type with white densely-petalled flowers.

If you like the look of this special category of hydrangeas, you'll also want to check out others in the series, such as 'Expression', 'Freedom', 'Peace' and 'Romance.' Two of the new hydrangeas I planted were part of what is being called the New Generation. These are types that have the ability to bloom on old as well as new growth.

The flowers of 'Pistachio' are an antique blend of muted blues and pink and shades of bronze. It is compact, growing only 60 to 90 cm (two to three feet), which makes it a good candidate for a container.

'Wedding Ring' also grows to about the same size and produces enchanting lacecap-type blooms which are also a mix of colours.

Previous introductions in the New Generation series include the striking 'Red Sensation' and 'Snow Storm'.

The last two hydrangeas I planted were both new forms of *paniculata* - 'Fire and Ice', which has creamy white flowers that turn bright red in autumn, and 'Bombshell', which has white flowers and allegedly