*Hydrangea anomala* ssp. *petiolaris* - Climbing Hydrangea

*(Hydrangeaceae)*

*Hydrangea anomala* ssp. *petiolaris* is a slow-growing, clinging and twining vine. It has dense, glossy foliage that gives a three-dimensional attribute to walls, columns, or other supportive structures due to its lateral branches that extend horizontally for a few feet beyond the supportive structure. Climbing Hydrangea has creamy-white flat-topped inflorescences in summer are an added bonus.

**FEATURES**

**Form**
- primarily a large climbing vine; occasionally found as a slowly spreading groundcover, usually at the base of the existing vine, but sometimes planted specifically as a non-traditional groundcover
- maturing at up to 50' high, but often much shorter either a twining and clinging vine growth habit, or an arching and mounding groundcover
- initially a very slow growth rate, but becoming medium to rapid once established

**Culture**
- full sun to full shade
- prefers moist, well-drained, rich, acidic soils in partial sun, but is somewhat adaptable to poor soils and neutral to slightly alkaline pH soils
- propagated by seeds, rooted stem cuttings, or transplanting of stems that have self-rooted while lying prostrate on the ground
- Hydrangea Family (some sources list it under Saxifragaceae), with few diseases or pests
- commonly available in container form as a young staked vine
- eventually needs some pruning to keep it restricted at its base if it is to be used exclusively as a vine
- if chlorosis of the leaves occurs, a fertilization regimen will likely remedy the plant's nutritional balance, which is probably caused by alkaline soil pH

**Foliage**
- medium to dark green and glossy on the leaf uppersides
- alternate, broadly ovate, with an acuminate apex and cordate base
- leaf blades are about 3" long, with 2" long petioles
- autumn color is a poor yellowish green in Oct. and Nov.

**Flowers**
- a white outer ring of showy sterile florets
- surrounds the creamy to green-yellow, central, fertile flowers
- flat-topped 5" wide inflorescences flower in June and early July

**Fruits**
- ornamentally insignificant brown capsules lie in a flat plane within the persistent outer ring of tan sterile floret remnants
- not especially showy, but the entire flat-topped fruiting structure is persistent into the following season

**Twigs**
- young stout stems are a rich cinnamon color, exfoliating to show a light brown interior and having many aerial root holdfasts, while prominent buds are a shiny russet
- the curving vertical stems are complemented by many horizontally held stout stems, which give a three-dimensional effect to the structure that supports the vine

**Trunk**
- exfoliating, light brown, and stoutly

**USAGE**

**Function**
- structural cover, primarily used with wooden posts, large trees, or stone walls
- rarely used as a groundcover

**Texture**
- bold texture in foliage and when bare
- open density in foliage and when bare

**Assets**
- gives a three-dimensional effect to walls or posts due to its unique outstretched horizontal stems
- showy creamy-white summer flowers
- lustrous summer foliage
- shade-tolerant clinging and climbing vine

**Liabilities**
- very slow to establish
- somewhat open and informal as a vine (but if bold three-dimensional depth is desired for a structural support, this is a true asset)

**Habitat**
- Zones 5 to 8
- Native to Japan and China

**SELECTIONS**

**Alternates**
- perennial vines that may serve as a structural cover (*Actinidia, Akebia quinata, Aristolochia durior, Campsis radicans, Clematis, Hedera helix, Wisteria sinensis*, etc.)

**Cultivars – Variants – Related species**
- the species form is essentially the only type that is commercially available