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(12) **United States Plant Patent**  
**Mekada et al.**

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(54) **HYDRANGEA PLANT NAMED ‘FRCK 003 S 123’**

(50) Latin Name: *Hydrangea macrophylla* X  
*Hydrangea hybrida*  
Varietal Denomination: **FRCK 003 S 123**

(71) Applicants: **Hiroyuki Mekada**, Shimane (JP);  
**Hiroko Inamura**, Shimane (JP);  
**Tetsuya Kako**, Shimane (JP); **Yuka Shimizu**, Shimane (JP)

(72) Inventors: **Hiroyuki Mekada**, Shimane (JP);  
**Hiroko Inamura**, Shimane (JP);  
**Tetsuya Kako**, Shimane (JP); **Yuka Shimizu**, Shimane (JP)

(73) Assignee: **SHIMANE PREFECTURE**, Matsue (JP)

(\* ) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

(21) Appl. No.: **17/506,251**

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(51) **Int. Cl.**  
*A01H 5/00* (2018.01)  
*A01H 6/48* (2018.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**  
USPC ..... **Plt./250**

(58) **Field of Classification Search**  
USPC ..... **Plt./226, 250**  
See application file for complete search history.

*Primary Examiner* — Karen M Redden

(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm* — C. Anne Whealy

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A new and distinct cultivar of *Hydrangea* plant named ‘FRCK 003 S 123’, characterized by its relatively compact and uniformly mounding plant habit; freely branching habit; strong and sturdy stems; freely flowering habit; large and dense intermediate lacecap-type inflorescences with numerous double-type sterile flowers that can be “blued”; and good post-production longevity.

**1 Drawing Sheet**

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Botanical designation: *Hydrangea macrophylla* X  
*Hydrangea hybrida*.

Cultivar denomination: ‘FRCK 003 S 123’.

CROSS-REFERENCED TO CLOSELY RELATED  
APPLICATIONS

Title: *Hydrangea* Plant Named ‘FRCK 003 S 9’  
First Named Inventor/Applicant: Hiroyuki Mekada  
Filed: Concurrently with the instant application

STATEMENT REGARDING PRIOR  
DISCLOSURES BY INVENTOR/APPLICANT

A Japanese Plant Breeder’s Rights application for the instant plant was filed by the Assignee, Shimane Prefecture of Shimane, Japan on Jun. 22, 2020, application number 34778. Foreign priority is not claimed to this application.

The Inventors/Applicants and Assignee assert that no publications nor advertisements relating to sales, offers for sale or public distribution occurred more than one year prior to the effective filing date of this application. Any information about the claimed plant would have been obtained from a direct or indirect disclosure from the Inventors/Applicants and/or the Assignee. Inventors/Applicants and Assignee claim a prior art exception under 35 U.S.C. 102(b)(1) for sales prior to the filing date but less than one year prior to the effective filing date.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a new and distinct cultivar of *Hydrangea* plant, botanically known as *Hydrangea macrophylla* X *Hydrangea hybrida*, commercially referred to as

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a intermediate lacecap-type *Hydrangea* and hereinafter referred to by the name ‘FRCK 003 S 123’.

The new *Hydrangea* plant is a product of a planned breeding program conducted by the Inventors in Izumo-shi, Shimane, Japan. The objective of the breeding program is to create new freely-branching and early flowering *Hydrangea* plants with compact plant habit and intermediate lacecap-type inflorescences.

The new *Hydrangea* plant originated from a self-pollination made by the Inventors in June, 2010 in Izumo-shi, Shimane, Japan, of a proprietary selection of *Hydrangea macrophylla* X *Hydrangea hybrida* identified as code number FRCK-003, not patented. The new *Hydrangea* plant was discovered and selected by the Inventors as a single flowering plant from within the progeny of the stated self-pollination in a controlled greenhouse environment in Izumo-shi, Shimane, Japan in April, 2015.

Asexual reproduction of the new *Hydrangea* plant by vegetative tip cuttings in a controlled environment in Izumo-shi, Shimane, Japan since January, 2016 has shown that the unique features of this new *Hydrangea* plant are stable and reproduced true to type in successive generations.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Plants of the new *Hydrangea* have not been observed under all possible combinations of environmental conditions and cultural practices. The phenotype may vary somewhat with variations in environmental conditions such as temperature and light intensity without, however, any variance in genotype.

The following traits have been repeatedly observed and are determined to be the unique characteristics of ‘FRCK 003 S 123’. These characteristics in combination distinguish ‘FRCK 003 S 123’ as a new and distinct *Hydrangea* plant:

1. Relatively compact and uniformly mounding plant habit.
2. Freely branching habit.
3. Strong and sturdy stems.
4. Freely flowering habit.
5. Large and dense intermediate lacecap-type inflorescences with numerous double-type sterile flowers that can be "blued".
6. Good post-production longevity.

Plants of the new *Hydrangea* can be compared to plants of the parent selection. Plants of the new *Hydrangea* differ primarily from plants of the parent selection in inflorescence and flower form. Plants of the new *Hydrangea* have intermediate lacecap-type inflorescences with double-type sterile flowers whereas plants of the parent selection have lacecap inflorescences with single-type sterile flowers.

Plants of the new *Hydrangea* can be compared to plants of the *Hydrangea macrophylla* X *Hydrangea hybrida* 'FRCK 003 S 9', disclosed in a U.S. Plant patent application Ser. No. 17/506,321 filed concurrently, primarily in sterile flower color. When "blued", plants of the new *Hydrangea* have violet blue and white bi-colored sterile flowers whereas plants of 'FRCK 003 S 9' have blue-colored sterile flowers. In addition, plants of the new *Hydrangea* have intermediate lacecap-type inflorescences whereas plants of 'FRCK 003 S 9' have mophead-type inflorescences.

Plants of the new *Hydrangea* can be compared to plants of the *Hydrangea macrophylla* 'CMT 010', disclosed in a U.S. Plant patent application Ser. No. 17/506,171 filed concurrently. In side-by-side comparisons, plants of the new *Hydrangea* differ primarily from plants of 'CMT 010' in the following characteristics:

1. Plants of the new *Hydrangea* have lighter green-colored leaves than plants of 'CMT 010'.
2. Sterile flowers of plants of the new *Hydrangea* have broadly ovate-shaped sepals with serrate margins whereas sterile flowers of plants of 'CMT 010' have lanceolate-shape sepals with entire margins.
3. Sterile flowers of plants of the new *Hydrangea* are violet blue and white bicolored whereas sterile flowers of plants of 'CMT 010' are white in color.
4. Sterile flower pedicels of plants of the new *Hydrangea* are more horizontal than and not as upright as sterile flower pedicels of plants of 'CMT 010'.

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PHOTOGRAPHS

The accompanying colored photographs illustrate the unique appearance of the new *Hydrangea* plant showing the colors as true as it is reasonably possible to obtain in colored reproductions of this type. Colors in the photographs may differ from the color values cited in the detailed botanical description which accurately describe the colors of the new *Hydrangea* plant.

The photograph at the top of the sheet (FIG. 1) is a side perspective view of a typical flowering plant of 'FRCK 003 S 123' grown in a container.

The photograph at the bottom of the sheet (FIG. 2) is a close-up view of typical inflorescences of 'FRCK 003 S 123'.

#### DETAILED BOTANICAL DESCRIPTION

Plants used in the aforementioned photographs and in the following description were grown in containers in an outdoor nursery in Izumo-shi, Shimane, Japan and under cul-

tural practices typical of commercial *Hydrangea* production. During the production of the plants, day temperatures ranged from about 15° C. to 25° C. Plants of the new *Hydrangea* were not pinched and were about twelve months from planting rooted young plants when the photographs were taken and about three months from planting rooted young plants when the description was taken. Plants of the new *Hydrangea* are suitable to be treated with aluminum sulfate to "blue" the inflorescences. In the following description, color references are made to The Royal Horticultural Society Colour Chart, 2015 Edition, except where general terms of ordinary dictionary significance are used.

Botanical description: *Hydrangea macrophylla* X *Hydrangea hybrida* 'FRCK 003 S 123'.

Parentage:

*Female, or seed, parent.*—Proprietary selection of *Hydrangea macrophylla* X *Hydrangea hybrida* identified as code number FRCK-003, not patented.

*Male, or pollen, parent.*—Proprietary selection of *Hydrangea macrophylla* X *Hydrangea hybrida* identified as code number FRCK-003, not patented.

Propagation:

*Type cutting.*—By vegetative tip cuttings.

*Time to initiate roots, summer.*—About 30 days at temperatures about 15° C. to 25° C.

*Time to produce a rooted young plant, summer.*—About 90 days at temperatures about 15° C. to 25° C.

*Root description.*—Medium in thickness, fibrous; typically white to light brown in color, actual color of the roots is dependent on substrate composition, water quality, fertilizer type and formulation, substrate temperature and physiological age of roots.

*Rooting habit.*—Freely branching; medium density.

Plant description:

*Plant and growth habit.*—Relatively compact and uniformly mounded plant habit; upright and broadly outwardly spreading plant form; moderately vigorous growth habit and moderate growth rate.

*Plant height.*—About 35 cm.

*Plant diameter or area of spread.*—About 40 cm.

Lateral branch description:

*Branching habit.*—Freely branching habit with about four lateral branches per plant; pinching enhances lateral branch development.

*Length.*—About 12 cm to 15 cm.

*Diameter.*—About 6 mm.

*Internode length.*—About 5 cm to 6 cm.

*Strength.*—Strong, rigid.

*Texture.*—Smooth, glabrous; fully developed, woody.

*Color, developing.*—Close to 187B; at the internodes, close to 144B.

*Color, fully developed.*—Close to 187A; at the internodes, close to 144B; woody, close to 200B.

*Lenticels.*—Density: Medium density. Length: About 1.2 mm. Width: About 0.5 mm. Color: Close to 187A.

Leaf description:

*Arrangement.*—Opposite, simple.

*Length.*—About 10.8 cm.

*Width.*—About 7.8 cm.

*Shape.*—Ovate.

*Apex.*—Acute.

*Base.*—Obtuse.

*Margin.*—Coarsely serrate.

*Texture and luster, upper and lower surfaces.*—Smooth, glabrous; matte.

*Venation pattern.*—Pinnate, reticulate.

*Color.*—Fully developed leaves, upper surface: Close to 141A; venation, to 140D. Fully developed leaves, lower surface: Close to 138A; venation, close to 194A.

*Petioles.*—Length: About 2 cm. Diameter: About 1.2 cm. Texture and luster, upper and lower surfaces: Smooth, glabrous; matte. Color, upper and lower surfaces: Close to 143C.

Flower description:

*Flower type and habit.*—Showy rotate sterile flowers and conspicuous rotate fertile flowers arranged on intermediate lacecap-type terminal panicles; panicles semi-globular in shape; sterile and fertile flowers face mostly upright.

*Fragrance.*—None detected.

*Natural flowering season.*—In the garden, plants flower in the early summer in Japan; plants begin flowering about 55 days after planting rooted young plants.

*Flower longevity.*—Good postproduction longevity; fertile and sterile flowers last for about five weeks on the plant; flowers persistent.

*Quantity of flowers.*—Freely flowering habit; about ten sterile flowers per panicle and about 870 fertile flowers per panicle.

*Panicle diameter.*—About 20 cm.

*Fertile flower buds.*—Length: About 2 mm. Diameter: About 1 mm. Shape: Globose. Color: Close to 144B.

*Sterile flower buds.*—Length: About 5 mm. Diameter: About 2 mm. Shape: Elliptical. Color: Close to 145B.

*Fertile flower diameter.*—About 4 mm.

*Fertile flower depth (height).*—About 5 mm.

*Sterile flower diameter.*—About 6 cm.

*Petals, fertile flowers.*—Quantity and arrangement: Six in a single whorl. Length: About 1 cm. Width: About 5 mm. Shape: Ovate. Apex: Mucronate. Base: Acute. Margin: Entire. Texture and luster, upper and lower surfaces: Smooth, glabrous; matte. Color: When opening, upper surface: Close to 144C. When opening, lower surface: Close to 144B. Fully developed, upper surface: Close to 95C; color becoming closer to N77C with subsequent development. Fully developed, lower surface: Close to 98C; color becoming closer to N144D with subsequent development.

*Petals, sterile flowers.*—To date, petal development has not been observed on the sterile flowers.

*Sepals, fertile flowers.*—Quantity and arrangement: Five in a single whorl. Length: About 2 mm. Width: About 1 mm or less than 1 mm. Shape: Ovate. Apex: Acute. Base: Rounded. Margin: Entire. Texture and luster, upper and lower surfaces: Smooth, glabrous; matte. Color: When opening, upper surface: Close to 141A. When opening, lower surface: Close to 144B. Fully developed, upper surface: Close to 145C; color

becoming closer to 95C with subsequent development. Fully developed, lower surface: Close to N144A; color becoming closer to 102D with subsequent development.

*Sepals, sterile flowers.*—Quantity and arrangement: About eight or more in about one or two whorls. Length: About 3 cm. Width: About 3 cm. Shape: Broadly ovate. Apex: Mucronate. Base: Obtuse. Margin: Serrate. Texture and luster, upper and lower surfaces: Smooth, glabrous; matte. Color: When opening, upper surface: Close to 142B; when not “blued”, close to 142B. When opening, lower surface: Close to 142A; when not “blued”, close to 144B. Fully developed, upper surface: Close to 99B; when not “blued”, close to 72D; with subsequent development, color becoming closer to N77C and when not “blued”, close to 199D. Fully developed, lower surface: Close to 98C; when not “blued”, close to 75B; with subsequent development, color becoming closer to 148D and when not “blued”, close to 186C.

*Pedicels, fertile flowers.*—Length: About 4 mm. Diameter: About 0.5 mm. Strength: Moderately strong. Aspect: Mostly upright. Texture and luster: Pubescent; matte. Color: Close to 98B.

*Pedicels, sterile flowers.*—Length: About 2 cm. Diameter: About 5 mm. Strength: Moderately strong. Aspect: Mostly upright. Texture and luster: Pubescent; matte. Color: Close to 99C.

*Reproductive organs, fertile flowers.*—Stamens: To date, stamen development has not been observed on fertile flowers of plants of the new *Hydrangea*. Pistils: Pistil quantity per flower: Three. Pistil length: About 1 mm or less than 1 mm. Stigma shape: Semi-globose. Stigma color: Close to 106C. Style length: About 1 mm or less than 1 mm. Style color: Close to 107B. Ovary color: Close to 145B.

*Reproductive organs, sterile flowers.*—Stamens: To date, stamen development has not been observed on fertile flowers of plants of the new *Hydrangea*. Pistils: Pistil quantity per flower: Three. Pistil length: About 1 mm. Stigma shape: Globose. Stigma color: Bluish. Style length: About 0.5 mm. Style color: Bluish. Ovary color: Bluish.

*Seeds.*—To date, seed development has not been observed on plants of the new *Hydrangea*.

*Pathogen & pest resistance:* To date, under commercial production conditions, plants of the new *Hydrangea* have not been observed to be resistant to pathogens and pests common to *Hydrangea* plants.

*Garden performance:* Plants of the new *Hydrangea* have been observed have good garden performance and to tolerate temperatures from -5° C. to 40° C.

It is claimed:

1. A new and distinct *Hydrangea* plant named ‘FRCK 003 S 123’ as illustrated and described.

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FIG. 1

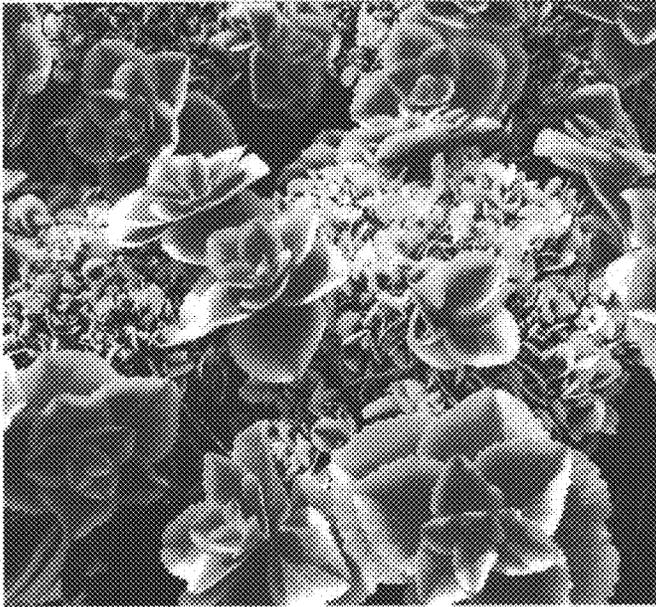


FIG. 2