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- (54) **HYDRANGEA PLANT NAMED ‘H217904’**
- (50) Latin Name: *Hydrangea macrophylla*
Varietal Denomination: **H217904**
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See application file for complete search history.

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A new and distinct cultivar of *Hydrangea* plant named ‘H217904’, characterized by its compact, upright and rounded plant habit; vigorous growth habit and moderate growth rate; freely branching habit with strong, thick and sturdy stems; early and freely flowering habit; semi-lacecap type inflorescences with numerous double-type sterile flowers that are intense red purple in color; and good postproduction longevity.

4 Drawing Sheets

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Botanical designation: *Hydrangea macrophylla*.
Cultivar denomination: ‘H217904’.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a new and distinct cultivar of *Hydrangea* plant, botanically known as *Hydrangea macrophylla*, commercially referred to as a semi-lacecap type *Hydrangea* and hereinafter referred to by the name ‘H217904’.

The new *Hydrangea* plant is a product of a planned breeding program conducted by the Inventor in De Kwakel, The Netherlands and Glandorf, Germany. The objective of the breeding program was to create new compact and freely-branching *Hydrangea* plants with strong sturdy stems, large inflorescences with numerous double-type sterile flowers, attractive sterile flower color and good postproduction longevity.

The new *Hydrangea* plant originated from a cross-pollination made by the Inventor in March, 2012 in De Kwakel, The Netherlands, of a proprietary selection of *Hydrangea macrophylla* identified as code number 10-0195-011 not patented, as the female, or seed, parent with a proprietary selection of *Hydrangea macrophylla* identified as code number 10-0170-098, not patented, as the male, or pollen, parent. The new *Hydrangea* plant was discovered and selected by the Inventor as a single flowering plant from within the progeny of the stated cross-pollination in a controlled greenhouse environment in Glandorf, Germany in March, 2013.

Asexual reproduction of the new *Hydrangea* plant by vegetative tip cuttings in a controlled environment in De Kwakel, The Netherlands since April, 2014 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 ‘H217904’. These characteristics in combination distinguish ‘H217904’ as a new and distinct *Hydrangea* plant:

1. Compact, upright and flat-top plant habit.
2. Vigorous growth habit and moderate growth rate.
3. Freely branching habit with strong, thick and sturdy stems.
4. Early and freely flowering habit.
5. Semi-lacecap type inflorescences with numerous double-type sterile flowers that are intense red purple in color.
6. Good postproduction longevity.

Plants of the new *Hydrangea* can be compared to plants of the female and male parent selections. Plants of the new *Hydrangea* differ primarily from plants of the female and male parent selections in sterile flower form as sterile flowers of plants of the new *Hydrangea* are double-types with several whorls of sepals whereas sterile flowers of plants of the female and male parent selections are single-types with a single whorl of sepals.

Plants of the new *Hydrangea* can be compared to plants of the *Hydrangea macrophylla* ‘H216906’, disclosed in U.S. Plant patent application Ser. No. 15/731,672. In side-by-side comparisons, plants of the new *Hydrangea* differ primarily from plants of ‘H216906’ in the following characteristics:

1. Plants of the new *Hydrangea* have semi-lacecap type inflorescences whereas plants of ‘H216906’ have mop-head-type inflorescences.
2. Inflorescences of plants of the new *Hydrangea* are shorter and flatter than and not as globular as inflorescences of plants of ‘H216906’.

3. Plants of the new *Hydrangea* have larger sterile flowers with larger sepals of plants of 'H216906'.
4. Plants of the new *Hydrangea* have darker red purple-colored sterile flower sepals than plants of 'H216906'.
5. Plants of the new *Hydrangea* and 'H216906' differ in reaction to aluminum sulfate treatment as sterile flower sepals of plants of the new *Hydrangea* treated with aluminum sulfate become violet blue in color whereas sterile flower sepals of plants of 'H216906' treated with aluminum sulfate become light purple in color.

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 on the first sheet is a side perspective view of a typical flowering plant of 'H217904'.

The photograph on the second sheet is a top perspective view of a typical flowering plant of 'H217904'.

The photograph on the third sheet is a close-up view of a typical developing inflorescence of 'H217904' that has not been "blued", that is, treated with aluminum sulfate.

The photograph on the fourth sheet is a close-up view of a typical developing inflorescence of a plant of 'H217904' that has been "blued".

DETAILED BOTANICAL DESCRIPTION

Plants used in the aforementioned photographs and in the following description were grown during the late spring and early summer in 13-cm containers in a glass-covered greenhouse in De Kwakel, The Netherlands and under cultural practices typical of commercial *Hydrangea* production. During the production of the plants, day and night temperatures averaged 17° C. Plants of the new *Hydrangea* were one year old when the photographs and description were taken. Plants of the new *Hydrangea* can be successfully 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* 'H217904'. Parentage:

Female, or seed, parent.—Proprietary selection of *Hydrangea macrophylla* identified as code number 10-0195-011, not patented.

Male, or pollen, parent.—Proprietary selection of *Hydrangea macrophylla* identified as code number 10-0170-098, not patented.

Propagation:

Type cutting.—By vegetative tip cuttings.

Time to initiate roots, summer.—About two weeks at temperatures about 23° C.

Time to initiate roots, winter.—About 18 days at temperatures about 20° C.

Time to produce a rooted young plant, summer.—About four weeks at temperatures about 23° C.

Time to produce a rooted young plant, winter.—About five weeks at temperatures about 20° C.

Root description.—Thick; typically whitish 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; dense.

Plant description:

Plant and growth habit.—Compact, upright and flat-top plant habit; strong and sturdy stems; moderate growth rate and vigorous growth habit.

Plant height.—About 30 cm.

Plant diameter or area of spread.—About 40 cm to 45 cm.

Lateral branch description:

Branching habit.—Freely branching habit; when pinched, about six to eight lateral branches develop per plant.

Length.—About 20 cm to 25 cm.

Diameter.—About 4 mm to 5 mm.

Internode length.—About 3 cm to 4 cm.

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

Aspect.—Upright to about 20° from vertical.

Strength.—Strong, sturdy.

Color.—When developing: Close to 144C; at internodes, close to 187B; lenticels, close to 187A. Developed: Close to 144A; at the internodes, close to 187B; when woody, close to 177C; lenticels, close to 187A.

Leaf description:

Arrangement.—Opposite, simple.

Length.—About 7 cm to 8 cm.

Width.—About 5 cm to 6 cm.

Shape.—Ovate.

Apex.—Acute.

Base.—Obtuse.

Margin.—Serrulate.

Texture, upper surface.—Smooth to rugose, glabrous.

Texture, lower surface.—Rugose, glabrous.

Venation pattern.—Pinnate.

Color.—Developing and fully developed leaves, upper surface: Close to 147A; venation, close to 145B.

Developing and fully developed leaves, lower surface: Close to 137D; venation, close to 145C.

Petioles.—Length: About 1.5 cm to 2 cm. Diameter: About 3 mm to 4 mm. Texture, upper and lower surfaces: Smooth, glabrous. Color, upper and lower surfaces: Close to 145B.

Flower description:

Flower type and habit.—Double-type sterile flowers arranged on semi-lacecap type terminal panicles; panicles globular to flattened in shape; flowers face upright to outwardly depending on their position in the inflorescence; no fertile flowers have been observed on plants of the new *Hydrangea* to date.

Fragrance.—None detected.

Natural flowering season.—Early flowering habit, plants begin flowering about 10 to 15 months after planting; flowering begins in the early summer and is continuous throughout the summer in Northern Europe.

Flower longevity.—Sterile flowers last about four months on the plant, sterile flowers persistent.

Quantity of flowers.—Freely flowering habit; outer whorl of flowers, about 20 to 30; total per inflorescence, about 160 to 180 sterile flowers per panicle;

to date, no fertile flowers have been observed on plants of the new *Hydrangea*.

Panicle height.—About 8 cm to 10 cm.

Panicle diameter.—About 15 cm to 20 cm.

Sterile flower buds.—Length: About 3 mm. Diameter: 5
About 3 mm. Shape: Rounded. Color: Close to 144B.

Sterile flower diameter.—About 4 cm by 4.5 cm.

Sterile flower depth (height).—About 0.5 cm to 1.5 cm. 10

Petals, sterile flowers.—Petal development has not been observed on plants of the new *Hydrangea* to date.

Sepals, sterile flowers.—Quantity and arrangement: About 13 to 15 in about three whorls. Length, outer 15
whorl: About 1.5 cm. Width, outer whorl: About 1 cm to 1.5 cm. Length, inner whorls: About 0.5 cm to 1 cm. Width, inner whorls: About 0.5 cm to 1 cm. Shape: Rhomboidal. Apex: Acute. Base: Cuneate. Margin: Entire. Texture, upper and lower surfaces: 20
Smooth, glabrous. Color: When opening, upper and lower surfaces: Close to 145C. Fully opened, upper surface: Outer sepals, close to 67A; when “blued”, close to 96C; colors do not change with develop-

ment. Fully opened, lower surface: Close to 65A; when “blued”, close to 96D; colors do not change with development.

Pedicels, sterile flowers.—Length: About 3 cm to 4 cm. Diameter: About 2 mm to 3 mm. Strength: Strong. Aspect: Erect to about 45° from vertical. Texture: Smooth, glabrous. Color: Close to 65B.

Reproductive organs.—To date, reproductive organ development has not been observed on sterile flowers of plants of the new *Hydrangea*; all reproductive organs are “transformed” into inner whorls of sepals.

Fruits and seeds.—Fruit and seed development has not been observed on plants of the new *Hydrangea* to date.

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.

Temperature tolerance: Plants of the new *Hydrangea* have been shown to be tolerant to temperatures ranging from about 3° C. to about 38° C.

It is claimed:

1. A new and distinct *Hydrangea* plant named ‘H217904’ as illustrated and described.

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