

EVERGREEN AZALEAS

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Evergreen azaleas are a large subgroup of rhododendrons so broad that they are often treated as a separate group altogether. They tend to be smaller shrubs than regular rhododendrons, with much smaller, glossier leaves. Evergreen azaleas usually bloom in reds, pinks, and whites. Azaleas can be used as small hedges, topiaries, bonsai, or border shrubs.

Latin name: *Rhododendron* spp.

Type: evergreen shrubs

Exposure: partial sun

Growth rate: slow-moderate

Hardiness: Variable. Refer to chart.

Size: 1-3ft tall & wide

Soil: Well drained, acidic.

Growth Habit: Variable. Generally rounded.

Where should I plant my azaleas?

Evergreen azaleas need partial shade. This will probably be one of the most critical things you do that will determine the success of your plants. Be sure that there is protection from hot afternoon sun. Too hot of an area can kill an azalea quickly. Try to keep them out of areas with reflected heat, and locations they may receive a lot of wind, as this can dry the foliage out quickly. Drainage is also an important factor as azaleas will not do well in waterlogged areas.

How much water will my azaleas need?

For the first year or two, water will be very important in establishing your azaleas. While this is true for all plants, azaleas tend to suffer a bit more from lack of water than others, especially in the hot summer months. The water issue will be even more important if your plants are planted in late spring or summer. Take care not to overwater though, just be sure to supply ample water when the weather creates a demand.

When should I fertilize and prune my azaleas?

The care will be about the same as for Rhododendrons – avoid fall pruning, and be sure to fertilize in the spring. Evergreen azaleas are best sheared right after bloom to shape and compact. They don't take severe pruning as well as regular Rhododendrons though. Fertilize in the spring after the frost is over with an acidic fertilizer. Fertilizing in late summer or fall will encourage tender new growth that will not usually survive through the first few freezes.

I have an old azalea which doesn't do much anymore – what can I do?

Azaleas get old too, just like everything else. After a few decades of growth, the plants will reach maturity and slow their growth quite a bit if they aren't worked with. Where as a young plant may put out 6" of growth a year, a mature plant may only push out ½"-1" yearly. Eventually, the plant just gets tired out and won't bloom well anymore. What you need to do is prune. Prune extremely hard, taking off ⅓ or more of the plant. What this will do is make the plant revert back to a younger state, and so it will start growing and blooming like it used to. Prevent this 'old age' by pruning or shearing every year or so.

I've seen a small lavender-purple azalea around, which one is it?

You would have a hard time finding a purple azalea. What you probably saw was a dwarf rhododendron. If in doubt, look at the foliage. If it is glossy, deep green, and has small hairs on the leaf, it is actually an azalea. Azaleas also generally have singly-arranged flowers, not grouped in clusters like Rhododendrons. If it is a Rhododendron, you'll find the leaves to be more of a dull blue green with an occasional brownish underside, and they sometimes have a spicy scent.

Are there any problems I should be aware of?

Like Rhododendrons, Azaleas can be affected by root rot, root weevil and cultural problems like nutrient deficiency and burning. Planting your azaleas in the proper location and using proper care can help to prevent most of these problems. If something does happen though, ask for a diagnosis so you can determine the right course of treatment.

EVERGREEN AZALEA VARIETIES

VARIETY	COLOR	BLOOM TIME	HARDY	HEIGHT	SERIES
Arabesk	Red	Mid	-5F	2-4'	Vuykiana
Blue Danube	Red-Violet	Late	-10F	3'	Vuykiana
Buccaneer	Red-Orange	Mid	-5F	3'	Glenn Dale
Caroline Gable	Rose Red (Deep)	Mid-late	-5F	2'-4'	Gable
Coral Bells	Rose-Pink	Early	-5F	2.5'	Kurume
Delaware Valley	White (Pure)	Early-mid	5F	2.5'	Mucronatum
Everest	White	Mid	-5F	3'	Glenn Dale
Flame Creeper	Red-Orange	Late	0F	1.5'	Satsuki
Girard's Crimson	Crimson Red	Mid	-15F	3'	Girard
Girard's Dwarf Lavender	Lavender	Mid	-15F	3'	Girard
Girard's Fuchsia	Red-purple ruffled	Mid	-15F	3'	Girard
Girard's Hot Shot	Scarlet Orange	Mid	-15F	3'	Girard
Girard's Roberta	Pink (Double)	Mid	-15F	3'	Girard
Girard's Rose	Pink ruffled (Deep)	Mid	-15F	3'	Girard
Girard's Variegated Gem	Rose Pink (Bright) - Var. foliage	Mid	-10F	2.5'	Girard
Glacier	White	Early	-10F	3'	Glenn Dale
Glamour	Rose Red	Mid-late	-5F	3'	Glenn Dale
Gumpo Fancy	Pink and White	Late	0F	1.5'	Satsuki
Gumpo Pink	Rose Pink	Late	0F	1.5'	Satsuki
Gumpo Red	Red	Late	0F	1.5'	Satsuki
Gumpo White	White	Late	0F	1.5'	Satsuki
Helen Close	White	Mid	-5F	2'	Glenn Dale
Hexe	Purplish Red (Hose in Hose)	Mid	-5F	3-4'	Kurume
Hino Crimson	Red (Crimson)	Early-mid	-5F	2.5'	Kurume
Hino White	White	Early-mid	-5F	2.5'	Kurume
Holland	Red (Bright)	Early	-15F	3'	Kaempferi
Karen	Pink-yellow	Mid	0F	3'	New Zealand
Macrantha Pink	Pink (deep)	Late	0F	1.5'	R. indicum
Mother's Day	Red (Rose)	mid-late	-5F	3'	Kurume
Pearl Bradford	Pink (Rose)	Late	-5F	2'	Glenn Dale
Peggy Ann	Pale Pink/White	Late	-5F	3'	Kaempferi
Purple Splendor	Purple Orchid (Hose in hose)	Mid	-5F	2.5'	Gable
Rosebud	Pink (Double hose in hose)	Mid-late	0F	2.5'	Gable
Minato	White/Lavender-pink	Late	-5F	2'	Satsuki
Shinnyo-no-tsuki	Pink (Rose) w/ white throat	Late!	-5F	2'	Satsuki
Silver Sword	Purple (Rose)	Early-mid	0F	3'	Girard
Stewartstonian	Red-Orange	Mid	-5F	2.5'	Gable
Tradition	Pink	Mid	-5F	3'	Kurume
Vuyk's Rosy Red	Pink (Rose)	Mid	-5F	2.5'	Vuykiana
Vuyk's Scarlet	Scarlet-rose (Bright)	Mid	-5F	2'	Vuykiana
White Rosebud	White w/ green throat, very double	Mid	-10F	2.5'	Kehr