

## Quick Guide - Rhododendron and Azaleas

### Where to plant:

- moist, well-drained, acidic soil, that is rich in organic matter (if you do not know the pH of your soil a quick test, available in our garden shop will help)
- Large leaf Rhododendron and evergreen Azaleas generally prefer a site protected from drying winds and hot summer sun (especially in the afternoon)
- Small leaf Rhododendron and deciduous Azaleas are more tolerant of exposed planting sites
- Avoid planting in dry soils, too close to foundation, under roof overhangs, under trees with aggressive root systems or dense shade

### Watering:

- Rhododendron & Azaleas have no tap roots, they are shallow rooted (1-2 feet deep) and the root zone may dry out during hot summers (a tap root is a large, central, dominant root growing deep into the soil)
- They should be well watered in hot summers; but never let them sit in water
- The roots of newly planted Rhododendrons will take a long time to grow out into the soil. Therefore it is essential that the rootball doesn't dry out - this is where the young plant draws water from
- Too much water promotes root rot that can cause plant death
- low availability of water in the root zone can cause sun burn on leaves
- Use mulch of organic matter to conserve moisture (leaves, pine needles, chip bark) and maintain moderate soil temperature

### Fertilizing:

- In fertile soil (testing your soil is recommended) Rhododendron & Azaleas can be grown without additional fertilizer
- Less fertile soils: use complete fertilizer designed for acid loving plants may be applied in late spring. We recommend 'Holly-Tone' for established plants and 'Bio-Tone' for newly planted Rhododendron & Azaleas.
- ALWAYS test your soil before adding fertilizer. NEVER OVER fertilize!!
- Nitrogen rich fertilizer should not be applied after June - fresh growth will be too tender for a possible early frost.

### Pruning:

- If necessary, prune immediately after flowering; Rhododendrons & Azaleas set next year's flower buds by mid to late summer; so pruning too late will remove next year's flowers
- Dead, Damaged and Diseased branches can be pruned out at any time
- Broadleaf Rhododendrons respond well to rejuvenation pruning (meaning you can prune hard if they are overgrown); they have many dormant buds that can be forced into new growth