Western Azalea

Rhododendron occidentale

Height: 10 feet

Spread: 10 feet

Sunlight: ◐

Hardiness Zone: 6



Western Azalea flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Western Azalea in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Description:

Rich and lovely white blooms with a hint of pink, feature a prominent yellow blotch; blooming in late spring the flowers have a lovely fragrance and are in bountiful clusters; delightful as a landscape accent; fall leaves turn yellow, scarlet, or crimson

Ornamental Features

Western Azalea is smothered in stunning clusters of fragrant white trumpet-shaped flowers with shell pink overtones and a gold blotch at the ends of the branches in late spring, which emerge from distinctive pink flower buds before the leaves. It has green deciduous foliage which emerges light green in spring. The glossy narrow leaves turn an outstanding yellow in the fall.

Landscape Attributes

Western Azalea is an open multi-stemmed deciduous shrub with a more or less rounded form. Its relatively coarse texture can be used to stand it apart from other landscape plants with finer foliage.

This is a relatively low maintenance shrub, and should only be pruned after flowering to avoid removing any of the current season's flowers. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Western Azalea is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use

Planting & Growing

Western Azalea will grow to be about 10 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 10 feet. It tends to be a little leggy, with a typical clearance of 1 foot from the ground, and is suitable for planting under power lines. It grows at a slow rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for 40 years or more.

This shrub does best in a location that gets morning sunlight but is shaded from the hot afternoon sun, although it will also grow in partial shade. Keep it away from hot, dry locations that receive direct afternoon sun or which get reflected sunlight, such as against the south side of a white wall. It requires an evenly moist well-drained soil for optimal growth, but will die in standing water. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. It is very fussy about its soil conditions and must have rich, acidic soils to ensure success, and is subject to chlorosis (yellowing) of the foliage in alkaline soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution, and will benefit from being planted in a relatively sheltered location. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone in winter to protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This species is native to parts of North America.