Japanese Azalea

Rhododendron molle ssp. japonicum



Japanese Azalea flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 5 feet

Spread: 5 feet

Sunlight: ◐

Hardiness Zone: 5

Description:

Clusters of fragrant, orange-red blooms in mid to late spring; matures into an airy shrub, with attractive leaves that turn red in the fall; needs highly acidic and organic soil that is well drained

Ornamental Features

Japanese Azalea is covered in stunning clusters of fragrant orange trumpet-shaped flowers with coral-pink overtones at the ends of the branches in mid spring, which emerge from distinctive red flower buds. It has dark green deciduous foliage which emerges light green in spring. The glossy narrow leaves turn an outstanding red in the fall.

Landscape Attributes

Japanese Azalea is an open multi-stemmed deciduous shrub with an upright spreading habit of growth. 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.

Japanese Azalea is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use

Planting & Growing

Japanese Azalea will grow to be about 5 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 5 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 not originally from North America.