# Black Hat® Rhododendron

***Rhododendron 'NCRX2'***



*Black Hat Rhododendron flowers*
*Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder*

Height: 3 feet

Spread: 3 feet

Sunlight: ◐

Hardiness Zone: 4

**Description:**

This captivating hybrid is compact growing, featuring very early blooming, long lasting clusters of ruffled lavender flowers, over sprays of leathery, purple-green, near black leaves; absolutely must have well-drained, highly acidic and organic soil

**Ornamental Features**

Black Hat Rhododendron is covered in stunning clusters of purple trumpet-shaped flowers with lavender overtones and hot pink spots at the ends of the branches from early to late spring. It has attractive plum purple-variegated green foliage with hints of black which emerges olive green in spring. The glossy oval leaves are highly ornamental and remain green throughout the winter.

**Landscape Attributes**

Black Hat Rhododendron is a dense multi-stemmed evergreen 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.

Black Hat Rhododendron is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use

**Planting & Growing**

Black Hat Rhododendron will grow to be about 3 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 3 feet. It tends to be a little leggy, with a typical clearance of 1 foot from the ground. 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. This plant will benefit from an application of bonemeal and/or mycorrhizal fertilizer at the time of planting. 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 particular variety is an interspecific hybrid.