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## DECIDUOUS AZALEAS (EXBURY AZALEAS)

Deciduous Azaleas are often the forgotten member of the Rhododendron family, as they really don't fit the general profile of the group. You've probably seen their incredible floral displays of oranges, yellows and reds. They can be confusing because they look like an azalea flower, but the plant looks very different. These plants are very tough and versatile (much more so than the evergreen types), and make a valuable addition to your landscape.

**Latin name:** Rhododendron spp.

**Type:** deciduous shrubs

**Exposure:** Full to partial sun

**Fall color:** usually bright red

**Growth rate:** slow-moderate

**Hardiness:** At least -10F, some to -45F.

**Size:** 4-6' tall x 3-4' wide (at least)

**Soil:** Well drained

**Growth Habit:** Upright, vase shape.

**Bloom Time:** around May

### What colors do deciduous azaleas come in?

Usually much warmer colors than evergreen azaleas, deciduous types are famous for their orange and yellow tones. Also available are reds and whites, with many intermediate tones such as peach and apricot. Deciduous azaleas are also very good at producing bi-colored blooms, often red and white, or several differing shades fading together. Colors can vary quite a bit from bud to flower drop. So, keep in mind that flowers may undergo many color changes as they age.

### What kind of sun exposure is acceptable?

Full sun is actually okay in this area. Part shade may be advisable if there are a lot of reflective surfaces or pavement nearby.

### What kind of soil do I plant with?

Deciduous azaleas need a well-drained, non-compacted, acidic soil. The biggest problems often faced by deciduous azaleas are root rot and other complications caused by poor soil. This is probably the most important factor you can monitor to ensure a successful plant.

### What about fertilizing and pruning?

As with the rest of the rhododendrons, be sure to prune immediately after bloom to prevent cutting off next year's buds. Deciduous azaleas, unlike the rest of their group, do better with minimal pruning. General thinning and a minor amount of shaping are sufficient.

Fertilize in the spring with other plants, and a shot of phosphorous in fall is good for root establishment. While not nearly as picky as other rhododendrons about soil acidity, deciduous azaleas will still prefer an acidic soil, so fertilize accordingly.

### How much should I water my deciduous azaleas?

They are not as water intensive as the evergreen azaleas. You still need to water well the first few years, but avoid overwatering, especially in cooler weather, as this can rot or stunt the plant's growth.