

The Turf Store Tips and gardening

Azaleas

Planting Instructions:

Azaleas need a well drained location with morning sun and afternoon shade. They will not thrive in wet areas and too much sun can harm their leaves and fade their flowers. Shelter azaleas from drying winds. The north, northeast or east side of a building or stand of evergreens or the filtered shade under tall trees can provide ideal conditions.

Proper Planting:

Azaleas can be planted any time of the year, even when in full bloom. Spring and early fall are ideal times for planting. Summer is ok if you give extra care to watering.

To insure proper drainage, azaleas should be planted high, with 2 inches of the rootball above the existing ground level in a hole at least twice as wide as the rootball. Make planting mix of 30% organic material and 70% original soil. If the azalea was in a pot, make sure to loosen the root system. Place the plant in the hole; adding planting mix and pack mix firmly. Water well. Mulch 2 inches deep making sure to keep mulch away from the stem of the plant.

Watering:

For the first season spring and summer, waterings should be done 2-3 times per week until fall, then once a week if they are small or the weather is hot. Always check the soil's moisture before watering (it should be lightly moist several inches down). Following years, water azaleas about once a week when there has not been a good soaking rain. Plants will need more water in hot summers and while in flower.

Pruning:

Azaleas rarely need to be pruned. When pruning is required, it should be done immediately after blooming. If you



wait until summer, you may cut off next years bloom.

Fertilizing:

Right after bloom with **Holly-tone** or any acid-type fertilizer; then again in fall half-rate with **Holly-tone**.

Azalea Lace Bug

(Stiphanitis pyrioides)

How to Identify Damage:

Lace bugs feed on the undersides of leaves and produce yellowish flecks on the upper leaf surface. The yellow mottling is in a large number of contiguous cells, giving a stippled appearance to the plant. The presence of brown, varnish-like droplets of excrement on the underside of the leaf is certain confirmation of lace bug presence.



Life Cycle:

Lace bugs overwinter on azaleas as eggs. The eggs are attached to the leaves and resemble brown cones partially embedded in the leaf surface near mid-vein. In the District of Columbia and Maryland, the eggs begin hatching in late April to late May. Nymphs are mostly black in color and have numerous spines, especially along the posterior end. Two generations are produced throughout the growing year. The adults are about 1/8 inch long with transparent wings. The segmentation of the wings makes them resemble stained glass window divisions or even lace. Development from nymph to adult takes about one month.

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