

cultivars that have a large cold requirement to break dormancy. This probably would not occur in places with more consistently cold winters.

Late-flowering cultivars were conspicuously low in flowering effectiveness. The 24 cultivars with mean peak flowering date in May averaged less than 15% flower coverage at their peak, whereas the 72 cultivars that peaked in March averaged 58%. This lack of effectiveness is due partly to the gradual flowering of many late cultivars at this location and partly to the lack of longevity of individual flowers at the high temperatures that can be expected in May.

Southern Indian hybrids usually flower here without fail, but 1992 was a disaster for 'Pride of Mobile', 'George L. Taber', 'Mrs. G. G. Gerbing', and 'Formosa' and its sports. Most of the flower buds on these plants had presumably been killed by a 26°F air temperature on November 5, 1991. Such occurrences make predicting azalea flowering time and quality about as much a gamble as predicting the weather itself.

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Success With Rhododendrons and Azaleas

Author: H. Edward Reiley

Publisher: Timber Press

Reviewers: Charles & Wanda Hammers

This book covers the full spectrum of rhododendron and azalea culture in a concise and easily understood manner. As the author states, the information presented is sufficient to lead the beginner to success in growing and can assist current growers to grow more successfully. Much of the book reflects the author's years of practical experience in propagating and growing azaleas and rhododendron in his personal garden and a commercial nursery. Had the book been available 20 years ago, we could have avoided many of the pitfalls of learning by trial and error.

After a brief introduction to the origins and taxonomy of the genus *Rhododendron* (includes azaleas) the author digs right in to the cultural requirements; soil, drainage, organic matter, guidance on selecting and purchasing plants, landscape, planting, fertilizing, mulching and pruning—all vital to success in growing these plants.

The cultural information can be tailored to specific locations using the provided climatic data and plant recommendations for selected regions around the world. The appendix includes tables of characteristics (hardiness, ten-year height projections, color, etc.) for several hundred azalea and rhododendron species and hybrids.

For both the beginner and those already addicted to "these most beautiful of all plants" the chapters on propagation (seed, cuttings, layers and grafting), hybridizing and flower shows could spark the thought of starting a small nursery. To this end the book includes a remarkable chapter discussing commercial growing including the relative advantages and disadvantages of both field grown and container grown plants, information also of value in selecting plants for the home landscape.

The book includes a timely description and updating of information related to insects and diseases, in part derived from university experimental station reports.

While our methods of caring for rhododendron and azaleas may vary slightly from Mr. Reiley's we have no doubt that his methods work and will lead to "Success with Rhododendrons and Azaleas". □

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